

# WIRE

*John Zorn*

JAZZ

FROM

HELL

jimmy giuffre

robin eubanks

lennie tristano

steve martland



# RAIN DANCE

Nana Vasconcelos is Brazil's master percussionist.

His international career now stretches back over 20 years, during which time he has been associated with such stellar talents as Pat Metheny, Don Cherry, Gato Barbieri, Milton Nascimento, B.B. King, Talking Heads, Jean Luc Ponty and Jan Garbarek.

Nana's Brazilian roots, however, are apparent in everything he plays. He is a consummate master of all the Brazilian percussion instruments. His own albums have always mixed the rich traditions of his native culture with the excitement of Nana's unique approach to music.

Now comes **RAIN DANCE**, Nana's latest album on Antilles.

Its release coincides with Nana Vasconcelos' European tour, which includes a showcase (with fellow Antilles artists Andy Sheppard and Danny Thompson) at London's Town & Country Club on Sunday March 19.

**Nana Vasconcelos: Rain Dance.**  
Available on CD (Antilles ANCD 8741), Cassette (ANC 8741) and Album (AN 8741)

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ANTILLES



## WIRE

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*"I can definitely say that music won't stop. It  
will continue to go forward." CHARLIE  
PARKER, 1953.*



### COVER:

*John*

*Zorn,*

*infra-red*

*peril.*

*Photo by*

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*Jay.*

### WIRE MAGAZINE

*Issue 61*

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4	<b>Now's The Time</b> <i>All news plus the return of John Mayer</i>
16	<b>Steve Martland</b> <i>Odd composer out meets Mark Sinker</i>
18	<b>Livewire</b> <i>Jack and John and Albert and . . .</i>
22	<b>Book Offer</b> <i>A great opportunity</i>
24	<b>Jimmy Giuffre</b> <i>Graham Lock takes on The Jazz Police</i>
28	<b>Lennie Tristano</b> <i>A new evaluation by Brian Priestley</i>
32	<b>John Zorn</b> <i>Graham Lock guns him down</i>
38	<b>Robin Eubanks</b> <i>Karen Bennett bones up</i>
42	<b>New York</b> <i>The Apple juiced by Howard Mandel</i>
44	<b>Books</b> <i>Biography and more</i>
47	<b>Soundcheck</b> <i>Roadside Picnic, Tommy Smith, the vinyl flows on</i>
66	<b>The Write Place</b> <i>The best of our bulging mailbag</i>

### NOT WITH A BANG, BUT A POP STAR

**V**IOLINIST Billy Bang will not now be playing London's Camden Festival this month, but the Cecil Taylor dance project on 20 March is on. Bang's planned concert with the Reggae Philharmonic Orchestra had to be cancelled when the latter were unable to confirm the date; in their place, singer Sarah Jane Morris and The Jazz Renegades are expected to open the three-night festival. Other Camden dates are as first printed in last month's *Wire* and repeated in *Club Dater* overleaf.

### DANCING BONES

**T**RUMBONIST Annie Whitehead debuts her new ten-piece band The Dance with three Jazz Moves London concerts in April. The Dance – comprising Whitehead, Chris Batchelor (trumpet), Mark Lockheart (saxes), John Parricelli (guitar), Kim Burton (accordion), Andy Lafone (bass), Ralph Salmins, David Prattman and Dawson (percussion), plus a tuba player to be announced – will play Watermans Arts Centre (7 April); Tabernacle Community Centre (8); and Mile End Half Moon (16).

### TAKE THIS CHAIN FROM OUR HERTS ...

**H**UMAN Chain, the multi-instrumental trio of Django Bates, Stuart Hall and Martin France, are to tour rural communities in Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire. The tour, sponsored by Eastern Jazz and others, begins in Beds in March with visits to Biggleswade Library (2 March); Bedford Library (9); Harlington School Theatre (10); Hatfield Poly (15); and then

moves into its second leg, through Herts, in April with gigs at Bushey Heartspring Suite (8); St Albans Moultings Arts Centre (15); Berkhamstead Civic Hall (16). Details of concerts, and various workshops, from 0780 66199.

### GEE! SCOOP! 'YAK TOURS!

**T**HE JONATHAN Gee Trio, The Scoop and Birdyak all undertake UK tours this month. Pianist Gee, with Peter Fairclough (drums) and Thaddeus Kelly (bass), visit Bristol Albert Inn (12 March); Oxford Jericho Tavern (13); Swansea Liberal Club (14); Nottingham Old Vic (15); Wakefield Sports Club (17); Sheffield Leadmill (lunchtime, 19); Sheffield Mr Kites (19); Colchester Arts Centre (23); Cardigan Theatre Mwldan (27); London RFH (lunchtime, 30); London Bass Clef (30).

The Scoop, a group comprising Larry Fishkind (tuba), Tristan Honsinger (cello), Aleksander Kolkowski (violin), Alex Maguire (piano), take their music/theatre piece *Make Your Move* – a mixture of "Ionesco, vaudeville and Ealing" – to Dartington Hall (8 March); Brentford Watermans (14); Exeter Arts Centre (18); Brighton Pavilion Theatre (19); Barnet Old Bull Arts Centre (20). Further details from 01-358 1228.

Birdyak, aka concrete poet Bob Cobbing and gas-masked guitarist Hugh Metcalfe, plus guest violinist Ma-Lou Bangerter, bring their "klinker zoundz" to London Penbury Tavern (1 March); Leeds Termites Club (3); Todmorden Nanholt Centre (4); London Pentameters (6); Oxford Buxton

Hall (8); Sheffield Hallamshire (9); Colchester Minories (10); London Duke Of Wellington (11). Birdyak, minus Bangerter, also share a bill with The Pointy Birds at London's Apples And Snakes Club on 31 March.

### SHIFTING MAKESHIFT

**L**ONDON's Makeshift Club has moved from the Duke Of Wellington to a new home at the Red Rose Club, 129 Seven Sisters Road, N17. Now operating on alternate Wednesdays, their March bookings are Trevor Watts' Moire Music (8 March) and the Louis Moholo quartet (22). The club hopes to stage, in May or June, what would probably be the only UK gig this year of the London's Jazz Composers Orchestra – all offers of financial assistance gratefully received! Details from 01-263 4962.

### MEALS ON WHEELS

**R**OADSIDE Picnic, featuring tenorist Dave O'Higgins, wheel out their new fusion for a UK tour in March and April through Bath Moles Club (4 March); Edinburgh Queens Hall (10); Newcastle University (11); Sheffield Polytechnic (12); Teeside Polytechnic (13); London Ronnie Scott's Club (20-25); Nottingham Old Vic (19 April); London Battersea Arts Centre (29).

### TERRA AT THE TATE!

**S**TEVE Martland's latest composition *Terra Firma* gets its world premiere at London's Tate Gallery on 14 and 15 March. The piece, for five vocalists and electronics, accompanies a video by Robert Katz; and after the Tate debut, will be toured by the Innererklang

Music Theatre group to Tunbridge Wells Trinity Arts Centre (22 March); Great Yarmouth St George's Arts Centre (14 April); Bedford Bowen West Community Centre (15); London Almeida Theatre (16).

### RA BLASTS OFF!

**H**ARDCORE rock label Blast First are to release LPs by Sun Ra and Glenn Branca. Ra, the septuagenarian band-leader from Planet Saturn, is preparing a compilation, *Out There*, for May release; while US noise composer Branca's *Symphony No 6 (Devil Chorus At The Gates Of Hell)*, featuring massed electric guitars at full volume, should appear in April. Blast First also hope to set up UK gigs for both Ra and Branca in the summer.

### JIMMY MACK IS COMING BACK!

**O**RGANIST Jimmy McGriff is set to play two London concerts in May. McGriff's quartet, featuring altoist Hank Crawford, will play the 100 Club on 20 May plus one other gig, date and venue tbc. Watch this space for details.

Also visiting London in May is baritone giant Gerry Mulligan, whose quartet will play the Barbican on 1 May. Details from 01-39 7791.

### MAYER'S INDIAN SUMMER

**V**IOLINIST/composer John Mayer is reforming the Indo-Jazz Fusions double-quintet which he co-led in the 1960s with altoist Joe Harriott. New personnel for the group, which originally disbanded after Harriott's death in 1973, could not be confirmed at



SUN RA - from OUT THERE to here.

press-time, though pianist Kenny Clayton will be leading the jazz quintet. The group debut with four Jazz Moves London concerts at the Tabernacle Community Centre (4 March); Albany Empire (5); Barnet Old Bull Arts Centre (18); and Camden's Cut In The Jazz festival (19). Details from 01-272 2304.

#### DOUBLE TROUBLE

THE LONDON Jazz Composers Orchestra joins forces with the Globe Unity Orchestra for a special one-off concert, organised by the Westdeutscher Rundfunk, to be broadcast live from the Musikhochschule in Cologne on 1 April. The concert will feature two compositions written for the occasion, *Double Trouble* by bassist Barry Guy and a piece by pianist Alex von Schlippenbach. The LJCO then travel to Zurich to record another Guy composition, *Harmos*, due for release on the Swiss Intakt label later this year.

#### FAN-TAKT-IC!

MARILYN Crispell, Karen Borca and Tenko are among the artists appearing at this year's Taktlos Festival, held in the Swiss cities of Zurich, Bern and Basel from 14-16 April. Pianist Crispell's trio, with Reggie Workman (bass) and Paul Motian (drums), plus the Bittova-Fajt Duo and the Katharina Weber Quartet, play Basel (14 April), Zurich (15), Bern (16); bassoonist Borca's quartet, with Irene Schweizer (piano), William Parker (bass), Andrew Cyrille (drums), plus the Deidre Murray/Elliott Sharp duo and the Jeanne Lee trio, play Zurich (14), Bern (15), Basel (16); while singer Tenko and guitarist Fred Frith,

plus the Zeena Parkins/Ikue Mori duo and Shelley Hirsch's vocal group Direct Sound, play Bern (14), Basel (15) and Zurich (16). Full details from Zurich 481 91 43/44.

#### WESTERING HOME

THE EUROPEAN Jazz Quartet and the Charlie Hearnshaw Quintet will both be touring in the south-west of England in March and April. The EJQ, comprising Gerd Dudek (reeds), Rob van den Broeck (piano), Ali Haurand (bass) and a new member Tony Levin (drums), play a short tour this month organised by South-West Jazz: dates are Southampton venue tbc (13 March); Birmingham Cannonball (14); Dartington Great Hall (15); Bath Michael Tippett Centre (16); Brighton Concord Club (17). Details from 0392 218 368.

Reedsman Hearnshaw leads his quintet - Peter Jacobsen (piano), Ricky Thorn (guitar), Pete Hellier (bass), Coach York (drums) - to Aldershot West End Centre (17 March); Brentwood Hermit Club

(19); London Pizza Express (23); Swindon True Heart Inn (24); Plymouth Jazz Club (April 9); Oxford Brewhouse (26); Colchester Arts Centre (27); Torbay Rainbow Jazz (28). Details from 0803 33692.

#### PRAISE JAA

ROADSIDE Picnic are to headline the first out-of-London concert by Jazz Against Apartheid, the recently-formed organisation which runs regular monthly gigs at London's Jazz Cafe. The concert at Bristol University on 2 March, will feature Picnic, the Ed Jones Quartet, the Roger Bunn Band and, possibly, special surprise guests. Details from Bristol University Students Union on 0272 735 053.

#### BATH AND A SHAVE FOR STEVE

STEVE Williamson helps this year's festival season get into full swing by opening both the Bath Jazz Week and the Camden Unity Theatre's Cut In The Jazz Festival. The latter, on Sunday afternoons from 26 February to 19 March,

features the Steve Williamson Quintet, Haji Ahkba, IDJ and Carol Leemin (26 Feb); The Last Poets, Hope Augustus, IDJ and the Jeff Gordon Quintet (5 March); Clifford Jarvis Quintet, Last Poets, Carol Leemin, Debbie Bodoo (12); Indo-Jazz Fusions and Jewon (19). Concerts run from 2.30-6.00 pm at 6-8 Greenland Street, London NW1; tickets £5, £3. Details from 01-482 1287.

The Bath Jazz Week opens with the Williamson quintet (10 March); then has District Six (14); the 13-piece Bullit - playing a special festival commission, *The Split In The Mountain* - plus the European Jazz Quartet (16); John Etheridge (18). The concerts, plus several workshops, are at a variety of venues: details from Bath Arts Association, 0225 448 243.

#### OUTLOOK FOR APRIL: SONNY, DEWEY ... AND FRISSELLING!

SONNY Rollins, Dewey Redman and Bill Frisell are among the artists lined-up for UK visits in April. Sax colossus Rollins brings his sextet of Clifton Anderson (trombone), Jerome Harris (guitar), Mark Soskin (keyboards), Bob Cranshaw (bass), Tommy Campbell (drums), for their only UK appearance at London's Theatre Royal on 23 April.

Tenorman Redman's trio will play Greenwich Borough Hall (28 April) and Leeds Trades Club (29), with more gigs likely to be announced later; while guitarist-of-the-moment Frisell and his quartet - Hank Roberts (cello), Kermit Driscoll (bass), Joey Baron (drums) - are due to play a London date in late April. Full details of all the above in next month's *Wire*.

w h e r e

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m o n t h

<b>ALDERSHOT</b> <i>West End</i>	ANDY SHEPPARD SXT	16	<i>Hall</i>	<b>BARBICAN</b>	TERRY DISLEY BAND	25
STEVE BERRY TRIO	17	<b>EDINBURGH</b> <i>Queen's Hall</i>	STAN TRACEY	20	GARY BURTON,	<b>OASIS</b>
<b>BIRMINGHAM</b> <i>Adrian</i> <i>Bowl Hall</i>	ANDY SHEPPARD SXT	3	<i>Old Vic</i>	CHICK COREA	18	DEREK BAILEY with:
STAN TRACEY	16	GARY BURTON,	FLIGHT	1	STAN TRACEY	28
<i>Midlands Arts Centre</i>	CHICK COREA	17	ALEX MAGUIRE'S CAT	<b>BASS CLEF</b>	STEVE BERESFORD	4
NANA VASCONCELOS	18	DANNY THOMPSON'S	O'NINE TAILS	22	ALEX WARD	11
<b>BRENTWOOD</b> <i>Monkey's</i>	WHATEVER	24	<b>OLDHAM</b> <i>Royal Hall</i>	HAJI AHKBA, DON	<b>100 CLUB</b>	
ANDY SHEPPARD SXT	5	TOMMY FLANAGAN	DICK MORRISSEY	WELLER QRT	1	CHAMPION JACK
<b>BRIGHTON</b> <i>The Concorde</i>	TRIO	31	<b>OXFORD</b> <i>Brewhouse</i>	15	DUPREE	23
MARTIN TAYLOR	10	(LATE NIGHT)	JOHN ETHERIDGE	BARBARA THOMPSON	TOMMY CHASE	31
<i>Gardner Arts Centre</i>	<b>EXETER</b> <i>Arts Centre</i>	31	ART THEMEN QRT	TRIO	QUEEN ELIZABETH	
STAN TRACEY	9	STEVE BERRY TRIO	3	26	ZILA	25
<b>BRISTOL</b> <i>Theatre Royal</i>	<b>GATESHEAD</b> <i>Leisure</i>	<b>SALISBURY</b> <i>Arts Centre</i>	ANDY SHEPPARD SXT	<b>BATTERSEA ARTS</b>	<b>ROYAL FESTIVAL</b>	
ANDY SHEPPARD SXT	26	<b>GATESHEAD</b> <i>Centre</i>	<b>SHEFFIELD</b> <i>Crucible</i>	<b>CENTRE</b>	<b>HALL</b>	
<b>BURNLEY</b> <i>Padibam Town</i> <i>Hall</i>	STAN TRACEY	18	STAN TRACEY	19	DANNY THOMPSON'S	MODERN JAZZ QRT
A LITTLE WESTBROOK	<b>HULL</b> <i>Spring Street Theatre</i>	<b>HULL</b> <i>Spring Street Theatre</i>	<b>HULL</b> <i>Hallamshire Hotel</i>	WHATEVER	21	<b>ROYALTY THEATRE</b>
MUSIC	A LITTLE WESTBROOK	JOHN JASNOCK	JOHN JASNOCK	<b>CAMDEN FESTIVAL</b>	ANTHONY BRAXTON,	
<b>CAMBRIDGE</b> <i>Castle Park</i>	MUSIC	WIRE ASSEMBLY	WIRE ASSEMBLY	TONY OXLEY TRIO/	TONY OXLEY TRIO/	
AZIMUTH	3	<b>LEEDS</b> <i>Trades Club</i>	5	<b>CECIL TAYLOR</b>	EVAN PARKER	
<i>Flambards</i>	STAN TRACEY	11	<b>LEEDS</b> <i>Merlin Theatre</i>	14	<b>RONNIE SCOTT'S</b>	
KEN STUBBS	19	LEICESTER	ANDY SHEPPARD SXT	16	CEDAR WALTON	6-18
ALAN STUART OCTET	STAN TRACEY	11	LEICESTER	CAMDEN FESTIVAL	<b>SCALA CINEMA</b>	
<i>Venue the</i>	12	12	AKEMI KUHN,	LESTER BOWIE/29TH	29TH STREET SAX QRT	14
29TH STREET SAX QRT	17	<b>LIVERPOOL</b> <i>The Bluecoat</i>	VANESSA MACKNESS,	STREET SAX QRT/JAZZ	<b>TABERNACLE</b>	
22	AZIMUTH	8	YUKIE TSUNDRA	2	29TH STREET SAX QRT	A LITTLE WESTBROOK
<b>CARDIFF</b> <i>Four Bays Inn</i>	DICK MORRISSEY	18	<b>SWANSEA</b> <i>Tim Monday's</i>	ANDY SHEPPARD SXT/	MUSIC/DANNY	
A LITTLE WESTBROOK	PHILHARMONIC HALL	18	STEVE BERRY TRIO	NANA VASCONCELOS/	THOMPSON'S	
MUSIC	STAN TRACEY	12	ZILA	6	WHATEVER/PALU	
STEVE BERRY TRIO	2	<b>SWINDON</b> <i>Link Centre</i>	20	WHATEVER/PALU	WHATEVER	11
HEAVY QRT	7	MAIDSTONE	REID	19	<b>VORTEX</b>	
ANDY SHEPPARD	10	HAZLITT	PAUL ROGERS,	CLUB IMPROV	STAN TRACEY, ART	
ZILA	12, 13	BRIAN PRIESTLEY	GEORGE HASLAM,	MARCIO MATTOS	7	
NICK EVANS, KEITH	21	SPECIAL SEPTET	ALEX MAGUIRE,	JOHN BUTCHER QRT	3	THEMEN
TIPPETT	21	MANCHESTER	STEVE NOBLE	10	DAVE FOWLER TRIO	14
<b>CHELTENHAM</b> <i>Queen's</i>	THE WALL	BAND ON	WYVERN THEATRE	14	DUDU PUKWANA,	
MORRISSEY, MULLEN	15	HERB ELLIS	2	PAUL ROGERS	28	MERVYN AFRICA
<b>COVENTRY</b> <i>Warwick</i> <i>University</i>	15	WINCHESTER	STAN TRACEY	21	JAZZ CAFE	4
ANDY SHEPPARD SXT	2	THEATRE	21	EVAN PARKER, STAN	JANUSZ CARMELLO	
<b>DARLINGTON</b> <i>Arts</i> <i>Centre</i>	TRIO	26	TRACEY	17	TRACEY	11
A LITTLE WESTBROOK	<b>NEWCASTLE UPON</b>	30	STEVE BERRY TRIO	17	TOURNER	15
MUSIC	TYNE	16	ASHLEY SLATER'S OFF	2	ELTON DEAN,	
HERB ELLIS TRIO	CORNER HOUSE	23	THE BONE	14	HOWARD RILEY	18
1	1	ALBANY EMPIRE	LOUISE ELLIOTT QRT	5	GEORGE HASLAM,	
HERB ELLIS TRIO	NOTTINGHAM	A LITTLE WESTBROOK	JAZZ AGAINST	7	PAUL RUTHERFORD	22
4	ALBERT	MUSIC/DANNY	APARTHEID	13	JONATHAN GEE,	
HERB ELLIS TRIO	1	THOMPSON'S	IAIN BALLAMY QRT	18	DAVE O'HIGGINS	29
WHATEVER	12	WHATEVER	SUE SHATTOCK,	18	SUE SHATTOCK,	
NOTTINGHAM	31	WIRE MAGAZINE	TERRY DISLEY	31	TERRY DISLEY	



TOMMY FLANAGAN in the early 60s, photographed by BILL WAGG.

The late 80s Flanagan is at Edinburgh and Manchester this month.



DISTURBING TO hear of so many father figures in the music suffering from the onset of that great leveller, old age. **Cab Calloway**, for instance, now 81 years old but still a determined performer, was taken into intensive care just after Christmas following a backstage collapse. **Dexter Gordon** managed only three numbers at a concert in Connecticut in December and was hospitalised with pneumonia. **Miles Davis** was again taken ill after a concert in Barcelona early this year, and the announcement of a couple of dates for Miles in Cardiff and Manchester proved premature. Saddest of all, perhaps, was the admission of **Art Blakey** to UCH here in London. The great Messenger managed to fulfil most of his engagement at Ronnie Scott's in January but looked ill when attending the opening of The Theatre Space at Jacksons Lane Community Centre, named Art's Place in his honour. We wish all of these senior statesmen well . . . The Big Cat was on hand to witness the Jacksons Lane beano, anyway, where familiar faces like **Jean Toussaint**, **Jason Rebello**, and **Cleveland Watkiss** did their bit. Another **Gail Thompson** success story, following Gail's establishment of the Rock Garden sessions (now switched to Saturday) and whatever else she's cooking up. We hear a possible Earls Court venue is next for the Thompson treatment . . . More on **Miles**. While convalescing, maybe the great man is watching himself on TV. One thing we spotted in New York over Christmas was the appearance of a TV commercial for new radio station CD 101.9, being sold as the coolest thing on the airwave. At the end of an advert which includes shots of **Bobby McFerrin**, **Grover Washington** and others, Miles comes on and mumbles: "CD 101.9. Very cool. Like me." Well, we're not going to argue . . . The shame continues. After many promises of bringing back *Jazz Today*, the Radio 3 programme which is *still* the only place where new British jazz gets a regular live airing, the network has again shelved the series after a paltry six episodes – which, we might

add, included some superb sessions from the likes of **Andy Sheppard** and **Spirit Level**. The word is that it "may" come back next autumn. But don't bank on it . . . Nice to meet **Lou Reed** on a recent promotional trip to London. Lou told The Cat that back in his college days he used to have a radio show called *Excursion On A Wobbly Rail*, named after the Cecil Taylor composition, and never missed an **Ornette Coleman** show whenever the alto leader was in town. He's also been asked to contribute a track to the **Charles Mingus** compilation which is the next A&M/Hal Willner project. What we want to know is: who's going to do "The Shoes Of The Fisherman's Wife Are Some Jive Ass Slippers"? . . . Is this the power of *Hotwire* at work? After our grumbles a couple of issues back, it seems that MCA are releasing the **Jack DeJohnette** album over here, after all . . . **David Murray** to tour here in June, in a quartet format – maybe the group with **Dave Burrell** and **Fred Hopkins**. Speaking of which, why doesn't someone start distributing the superb Japanese label DIW here, which records Murray, the **Art Ensemble**, **James Blood** and more in magnificent deluxe pressings and sleeves? . . . Plans already well in hand for this year's Outside In Festival at Crawley. Mark 1–2–3 September in your diaries now. A host of unusual visitors will make their way in, and plenty of special events should make this *the jazz event* in the British calendar for '89 . . . Some of you will have noted a further change in our personnel. We bid a somewhat surprising early goodbye to **Paul Basford**, who was made an offer he couldn't refuse just after joining the team. Our new Advertising Manager is **Roger Thomas**, who combines ruthless revenue-seeking (what does that mean, Roger?) with a long-standing affiliation with the music. Call him now if you want to discuss the price of a quarter-page, the new **Tommy Smith** album, or where he gets those suits from . . .

THE BIG CAT

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## they all played **raga**time

The double-quintet co-led by John Mayer and Joe

Harriott in the 1960s brought about a new Indo-

Jazz fusion. Violinist Mayer tells Roland Ramanan

why he thinks the time is right for a raga revival.

Photos by Jon Barnes



REVIVALS ARE always suspect. Especially revivals of projects that were once very popular. Either the new version is only a pale shadow of the original, or the public doesn't want to know, or both. The Indo-Jazz Fusions group which put John Mayer on the jazz map in the mid-60s is about to run this time-honoured risk, a task made doubly difficult by the absence of the great Joe Harriott. The death of the altoist in 1973 signalled the end of the Indo-Jazz Fusions for Mayer, so important was his contribution to the overall sound of the group. So why the resurrection?

"I got a 'phone call from Don Norman, the manager of the Indo-Jazz Fusion band, saying 'what about starting the band again?'

"Looking for a saxophonist to take the place of Joe is very hard; I believe there is a young lad called Steven Williamson?"

Ahh, yes. (There were no firm bookings of musicians at the time of writing; we'll have to wait and wonder.)

This seems like a good moment to point out that the Indo-Jazz Fusions were conceived by John Mayer and were not, as has been implied, the brainchild of Joe Harriott (who was always a little uncomfortable with the project).

When record producer Denis Preston was finally convinced this unlikely East-West synthesis might be a good bet, a band

was duly assembled for the first recording session.

"We started, and after 15 minutes the whole band packed up. They were not used to hearing these sounds," recalls Mayer. "Then I said, 'Look, take it easy. We take it step by step. We work this slowly...' . . . and we got the whole thing. First time in the history of music that musicians from different cultures sat down and played from a score . . . Never been done before," he chuckles.

Either because of the persuasive musical cross-currents or its "exoticism", the *Indo-Jazz Suite* record was very successful, leading to clamours for a regular touring unit, which was in existence for a period of five years, evolving all the time into a cohesive and highly-charged ensemble. Pat Smythe's piano formed a central reference point for the jazz quintet, staying strictly inside the imposed structures of the ragas and talas, perfectly in tune with the discipline that is the hallmark of both European and Indian classical music: the twin gods of John Mayer the composer.

MAYER WAS born in Calcutta where he studied first Indian classical music with Sanathan Mukerjee and then western music with Philippe Sandre. After winning a violin scholarship, he came to London and began searching for a composition



teacher, eventually coming under the very prestigious wing of Matyas Seiber, himself a pupil of Bela Bartok. A fertile period of work followed, with pieces being commissioned by the London Philharmonic, a work for Charles Groves, a possible commission from Yehudi Menuhin and so on.

But then: "Suddenly everything crashed: 1959, 1960. The symphonic world at that time couldn't understand what I was trying to do." Then came the meeting with Denis Prston and, a few years later, Indo-Jazz Fusions was born.

As soon as Indo-Jazz was disbanded in 1973, the commissions came flooding in again and Mayer's output has since been large and remarkably varied: a flute concerto for James Galway, a concerto for orchestra (the RPO), a violin concerto for Eric Gruenberg, choral works, solo clarinet works, sitar and string quartet, and much more – his most recent project being a ballet based on the Indian legend of Krishna and the Gopis (milkmaids).

The process of marriage between the two musical cultures at Mayer's disposal is a complex one: "When I write for an orchestra, the orchestration is done on gamelan techniques. Indian music has no harmony so I have to write layers and layers of counterpoint . . . You have the juxtaposition of rhythm which makes it very exciting and *that's* the way I work."

Mayer has consistently come to startling symphonic conclusions full of texture and event, which belie any notion that the story of the classical orchestra may be drawing to a close. For him, improvisation must be disciplined. "They always held that against me: being classically trained. I tried to conform with the jazz musicians, and I think it was going very well, and then Joe died . . ."

*It was* going very well. The Indo-Jazz Fusions were completely unlike any other previous attempts at a musical East-West summit, which tended to be pastiches of East by West. I still listen to the records in the privacy of my own headphones; screwing my face up with enjoyment at Joe's charging solos. This is the fusion music that jazz may have forgotten, but in the shrinking musical world explored by the likes of Don Cherry and Shannon Jackson, Mayer's ordered (but equally imaginative) point of view is still valid.

#### R E C O R D S

Two of the original Indo-Jazz Fusions LPs were recently reissued by EMI in their Landsdowne series. John Mayer's own recordings include *Flute Concerto* by James Galway (RCA), *Six Ragamalas For Cello And Tamboura* by Rohan De Saram (Wergo) and *Dance Suite For Clarinet And Piano* by Georgina Dobree (Chantry). See news pages for details of the new Indo-Jazz Fusions tour.

## ANCESTRAL VOICES

by Brian Morton

If I had fourpence for every time I'd mentioned the Arditti String Quartet in these pages, I'd be well on my way to a new system. They do, however, merit a reprise here for their new and very remarkable double set of ELLIOT CARTER's quartets (Eccetera KTC 1065 and 1066). The earliest of these dates from 1951, though the set is rounded out by the 1943 *Elegy*; Carter's two early works for these forces have been disowned.

It's particularly interesting to compare this new performance of the 1971 Third Quartet, for which Carter won a Pulitzer Prize, with the Ardittis' earlier RCA Red Seal recording, where its latent lyricism seemed to be a little muted by the near-presence of Ferneyhough and Xenakis pieces. Quartets – Beethoven's, Shostakovich's, Bartók's – do for some reason seem to work in tightly-conceived generic cycles and there is no question that Carter's gain enormously from being listened to in sequence. The balance of initiative among the four voices is brought to almost perfect precision, notably in the Third, which is an intriguing disposition of duos, reminiscent of some of Britten's most inspired quartet writing. Absolutely essential, and one to file alongside the Arditti's Henze set.

While not too far from the subject of rights and royalties, Oxford University Press has just published *Harmonious Alliances: A History Of The Performing Rights Society (£19.50)* by the distinguished historian of music, CYRIL EHREICH. The PRS is 75 years old, having been founded just before the outbreak of World War One to protect the interests of composers and publishers. Its role has never been less than political, perfume in the 1930s, more determinedly as technology began to change the parameters of musical reproduction and exchange. Often controversial, not the least attractive of its characteristics over the years has been its catholicity. Membership over the years has linked such unlikely extremes as Elgar and John Lennon. With 21,000 members and a gross income of nearly £75,000,000 in 1985, it's time someone took a look at what PRS is doing. Suffice it to say that the news isn't all that good. The progress of bureaucracy runs as smooth as ever.

One of the most irritating symptoms of the narrowly bureaucratic system of musical administration and programming in this country is the inability to countenance more than one newly discovered foreigner at a time. Last year, it was the Finn Aulis Sallinen. This, it's the 53-year-old Berliner ARTHUR REIMANN. Best known perhaps for his *Lear*, a surprisingly intractable Shakespeare on the operatic stage,

premiered in January at the English National Opera, in tandem with an Opera Factory/London Sinfonietta production of Reimann's Strindberg gloss *The Ghost Sonata*, he can be heard in smaller scale on a CD by baritone Richard Salter and the Kreuzberger String Quartet performing *Unrealized* (based on Byron's letters to Augusta Leigh), paired with David Levine's reading of the 1979 *Variations* for piano. *Lear* makes dark and lonely listening but *Unrealized* (CPO 999 031 2) is a marvellous stepping-off place.

## THE SOUND OF AFRICA

by Mark Stinker

MANNERS HAVE changed. At present there are, or have just been, no fewer than three television crews in desert-bound Mali. And three has to be a crowd. Already what's happening is that paths broken by the pioneers are being trodden into mud by unimaginative follow-on work. No one trusts their own taste. Those that do become isolated, and then cranky: the little label Discrafrique, who brought over *Tif Brunido Boys* but refused to join the original World Music cartel, is getting just such a reputation.

Manners have changed. No surprise. Some operators, in their cups, yearn for the old days – when people knew that to survive they had to operate a certain Quality Control and *be seen to do so*. Others – promoters' – suggest in print that critics should actually criticise. That African acts so-deserving get bad reviews for a change. For the good of the whole. *Tif Real Sounds* – inoffensive, never front-rankers – suddenly become a target.

Manners have changed. Everyone claims that what they purvey is, of course, the very best. But different standards abound. And some music suffers. Even off-mainstream there's always a mainstream. Artists without Gillett or Kershaw or *Folk Roots* to rubber-stamp them suddenly find themselves in limbo. An orthodoxy freezes out those perceived to differ. Being on a major label can't help a maverick talent – Virgin's *Annahouhoula*, Epic's *Dvajan* – if they somehow fail one of World Music's many unspoken tests.

Manners have changed. *Tahiti Levy*, crown prince and founder of *zouk*, gives a press conference – very defensive about 1. M'Bilia Bel (his wife/protégée/star singing attraction) and 2. the hole that Caribbean *zouk* punched in Zaire's music. She's replaceable, it's on the wane. No one listens to either any more. Our interest in both her and it throws that back in his face, of course. *Saukau* has always been the favoured African pop for a few, ignored by the many. Definitely not on the Bandwagon. *Zouk*, for the moment, is.

Manners have changed. *Seylus*, an aggressive TV promo-

Now's the Time



tions label, put out a compilation called *New Roots* – can't review it as haven't heard it at time of press – where smart sales opportunism breaks sharply with the shibboleths in a still-too-insular fan-scene: ENKA and TINITA TIKARAM are entered side by side with BILLY BRAGG, DWIGHT YOAKAM and SALIF KEITA. World Music carved out as a linking space between New Age and Old Folk. But the ringing, shimmering psychedelia of Zaire's greatest export is still too rich to include. Ley, one of the two or three most significant names in the continent's music these past 30 years, is somehow edged out in his own celebration.

## AMEN CORNER

by Nick Kimberley

MUSIC – RADIO – culture: the only place you're likely to find that tripartite concept here is with the proliferating pirate stations – and even there, a deadening homogeneity is only a cat's whisker away. As computers replace DJs, that homogeneity may already have engulfed America, but one of the most enjoyable recent LPs provides a reminder of an era when the US airwaves promoted a vigorous regionalism which itself may now be part of the past. *Bless My Bones* (Rounder) is an anthology of "Memphis gospel radio in the 50s" – not including DJs, sadly, but offering examples of the black religious music which was such an important part of radio at the time.

Often with unabashed hucksterism – which audiences rarely found offensive – radio provided black and white communities with a less rigid spiritual focus than the church. Semi-professional singers whose talents might otherwise reach no further than the last pew were able to pick up a following far beyond the local congregation. Many became so popular that radio stations made dubs of their tunes, and it's these dubs that provide most of the 16 tracks. Groups like the SONG-BIRDS OF THE SOUTH (a rare female quartet) made no commercial recordings, so this LP becomes doubly valuable.

Doug Seroff's detailed notes refer to a "distinctive Memphis quartet style", but local minutiae take second place to musical power. The most forceful music comes from the BREWSTERAIRES, whose "Book Of The Seven Seals" is a two-part biblical epic. It's not one of the 50s dubs, but a 1972 private recording made for promotional purposes. The instrumentation is more intricate than elsewhere on the LP, but the vocal majesty is undiminished across the decades. The only other music available by this influential group is to be found in the boxed set, *Sun Records: The Blues Years* (Charly) whose 151 tracks include only half a side of gospel. Here, the Brewsteraires (recorded in 1951) hark back to an even earlier era of acapella harmonising.

How different the gospel of *Bless My Bones* is from the popular (and, globally, more influential) southern blues of the same era can be gauged by listening to *Rumble Chilien* (Charly), a selection from the Sun blues box, aimed unambiguously at the dance floor. Here gospel's subtle vocalese is displaced by raucous bonhomie, no less emotional, no less affecting. It's hard to believe that a track like JACKIE BRENSTON's "Tuckered Out" was recorded in the same studio as the Brewsteraires, and just two months before. In popular-music terms, the tracks are worlds apart. What's perhaps even more remarkable is that the same Chicago label (Chess) found it worthwhile to issue Brenston and the Brewsteraires for the national market.

If gospel and rhythm and blues in Memphis developed along divergent lines, another track from *Bless My Bones* points to the secular music which evolved from gospel. The SUNSET TRAVELLERS' "Sit Down And Rest" has a lead vocalist who sounds like a hard-edged Sam Cooke. He's OV WRIGHT; nearly a decade after recording this song in 1957, he followed Cooke into pop music. By then, both gospel and R&B were being displaced by soul music. On *The Deep South* (Ace) we hear Wright sing "Afflicted": the same gritty fervour permeates his voice, but he strives harder for his effects.

By the time Wright recorded this track in 1970, soul music in the Southern States had developed its own sound, quite distinct from what you could hear in Philadelphia or Los Angeles. The arrangements stuck closely to gospel chord changes, the instrumentation was comparatively uncomplicated, relying heavily on a walking bass and clipped brass, often with a ringing guitar and droning organ specifically echoing gospel. *The Deep South* is a genial anthology of this Southern Soul, here most perfectly expressed in the title track, TONY BORDERS' "Cheaters Never Win". The song, written by white musicians, is a parable of retributive paranoia which Tony delivers with full-blooded gospel melisma. A churchy organ provides an underlying hint of doom for, whereas gospel usually celebrated the sanctity of the family, "Cheaters Never Win" proclaims its utter annihilation.

It's the best track on an engagingly eclectic anthology. For a more concentrated vision of the best Southern Soul, turn to *Southern Soul Stock Vol 1* (Green Line/Charly), where WILLIE WALKER presents more of the Memphis version of soul, while KIP ANDERSON offers the Muscle Shoals sound. Walker is a fine if hardly original singer whose "You Name It, I've Had It" charts a moving path from exaltation to misery. Anderson, on the other hand, has one of the great soul voices, with the R&B edge of Bobby Bland and Jimmy McCracklin. On "Without A Woman", he achieves an almost frightening intensity, resorting to gospel screams when words can no longer do justice to his solitude and torment. At moments like this, the circle between the Brewsteraires and Kip Anderson is unbroken, the heavenly ecstasy of gospel and the carnal agony of soul become as one.

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## notating the class war

Steve Martland has been called everything from punk to fascist by a music establishment unnerved by his enthusiasms for collectivism, minimalism and the "incredible beauty

in crudeness". Mark Sinker investigates the young composer who's corrupting our nation's music. Photo by Neil Drabble.

"The first eight notes of 'Rule Britannia' contain everything that is the British people." (Richard Wagner)

"I ~~T~~ ~~w~~ ~~s~~ was playing with ambiguity. It was pointless doing something in the journalistic/propaganda sort of way, where you saw Mrs Thatcher talking about Victorian Values – and then you saw the poor. That would be so crass now. You can't do that any

more. It had to show the culture for what it is, and you had to bring your values, and either find it repugnant – or some people would think it's great, what she's done, that it's very good."

Steve Martland's BBC2 showcase composition *Albion* was broadcast on 18 December. Embattled, elegiac, not entirely successful – the music had to be trimmed to fit the film – it

attempted to unpick several strands from the ideas of patriotism, nostalgia, Victorian Values and Heritage UK. It got mixed responses – some denunciation, some worry about its apparent ambivalence, and a lot of written support.

The section that many viewers apparently liked best was also the most sinister, on second viewing: scenes of bee-keeping, hay-making, basket-weaving, a grainily pastoral England from long ago, golden images of the past-as-an-idyllic-foreign-country.

It came from amateur film shot (but we're never told this) during the Great War itself. The music crackles across stations from an ancient folk round to faraway-pastoral and foreboding tone-poem, but TV turns everything pint-sized, and we're really not good at hearing sound as anything except mood-track; the muted threat and the unreality register only slowly.

So this visible lyric calm, British classicism's old forte, is tainted by premonitions of the terrible war that ended the age of Empire. And then the film jumpcuts into High-Rise decay, pounding rock-soul, and outsider-industrialists Test Dept bashing metal. This is the present, vital, angry, powerful – hate it if you will.

*"Usually the concert hall is not a place where you expect the word confrontation to come up. But indeed, it will, for the next half hour. You are about to hear a piece that is frankly the most challenging listening experience you will probably hear in this hall."* (Conductor Leonard Slatkin introducing Steve Martland's *Babi Yar*, St Louis, 1985)

WITH JUDITH Weir, Martland is probably the only young British composer who can make a living through performances of his compositions, even if they're mostly abroad, in the States, Holland and Japan. He actually studied composition abroad – in The Hague under Louis Andriessen – after graduating from Liverpool University (in Music and English) in 1981.

Because he works with Test Dept and Sarah-Jane Morris rather than the London Sinfonietta, he has had to get used to being the "Punk" Composer in British music circles. His first piece he allowed in public performance was 1981's "Remembering Lennon" (it uses "Imagine" as a Cantus Firmus). Both these facts weary him.

"The definitions in classical music are so narrow that if you're remotely different – not walking about in a mohican, just spiked hair – you're suddenly this extraordinary creature from another planet, and that therefore you must be involved with pop music as well. And it's therefore very exciting. It's some sort of fetish that they've got."

At 29, Martland is of an age where not responding to the endless in-bleed of pop, rock, jazz and cannibalistic ad-jingle trumpery could only certify deafness. Basic sonic illiteracy. Music now has available an astounding range of resources, from the estranged Platonic reaches of notation through every possible non-diatonic tuning, polyrhythm and national exoticism to the rigorously unschooled and unscored neo-barbarism of rock. After all he was seduced away from Britain's arid, pervasive modernism by Andriessen's (semi-electric, very amplified) orchestra

Hokatus performing in Liverpool. Their aggressive minimalism opened his ears.

"I don't sit down and think, I want to be 'crossover' and 'influenced by rock music' – nothing as ridiculously calculated. But thinking about it, on reflection, I do write the music down – but what I want, when I write it down, is the effect in performance to be the same attitude to the performance of this music that rock musicians have when they are performing. So I don't put dynamics – I just put loud all the way through, more or less. And don't bother with complexities, nuances, filigree detail . . .

"But by just doing that immediately you're considered un-musical by the musical establishment. Because you're not involved with detailing, with beautiful scoring – you're having everyone playing at the same time, so therefore it's crude. But I like the crudeness. Because there's incredible beauty in the crudeness."

*"I only want to write for people I know now, who know what I want, who share the same attitude, like Maarten Altena, Gerard Boonhuis and Cees van Zeeland, the two Dutch pianists, the way they performed, there's no two players in this country could have played like that."* (Martland on his piano duet *Drill*)

MARTLAND'S PIECES fold together round philosophical/political problems rather than *à la mode* structural mannerisms. *Babi Yar* takes the Nazi Concentration Camp that was almost forgotten as its subject: some of the American performers admitted that they were actually frightened by the rhythmic intensity and bloc unisons of the music as they were playing it.

He learnt his craft in Holland, and maybe the Dutch habit of composing for particular performers, specific to-the-moment-formed collectives, helped take him into ICP/Fluxus territory ("Re-Mix", for example, is a jolly Willem Breuker-style parody-march).

But away from the multiple class snobberies of British music, high and low, in atmospheres of fierce debate – Andriessen himself is a highly politicised composer – and in the end socialist more than situationist by temperament, he's used the Dutch heritage to build up his own commitment to practical social analysis.

His next piece, *Terra Firma* (like *Albion*, with video, and a text by Stevan Keane), will look back at the Earth from the Moon, 20 years after the first extraterrestrial landfall, at an interplay of attitudes to nature and science, health and progress. And the recent *American Invention* works through the mesmerising practical numerology of minimalism and bar-counting – and demands on the players that led to Martland being called a "fascist" by certain English musicians, unused to this particular collective pressure.

"Once you corrupt that notion of 'an orchestra', it creates this amazing tension in the social unit itself, in the orchestra itself."

Then the noise of change begins to sound.

*TERRA FIRMA* receives its first performances at London's Tate Gallery on 14 and 15 March, then tours in March and April. See news pages for details.

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## Albert Mangelsdorff

LONDON  
BASS CLEF

ALTHOUGH HE has appeared over here with The Globe Unity Orchestra and the United Jazz And Rock Ensemble, this is the first time the great German trombonist has given any solo concerts in Britain. The prospect of a couple of sets of solo 'bone may sound a bit daunting, but I urge you to check out Albert Mangelsdorff's work in this area. Your ears will be opened to a riveting wealth of sound that emanates from the heart of the jazz tradition.

Multiphonics is his main stock-in-trade for these excursions, achieved by playing one note and singing another; the resulting overtones produce a real chord. That's fine, except that it takes immense discipline to get reproducible results with this kind of thing. But what Mangelsdorff has done is to elevate an effect to the level of a technique, and further still to create a whole musical world of composition and improvisation – something else again.

The trombonist made his appearance on stage holding a glass of water in one hand, his instrument in the other; he looked positively gaunt but immensely studious (he was wearing large glasses) as he prepared to start playing. He opened with the blues. Prancing and growling; touching on multiphonics at the corners and edges to break us in gently. Then more blues, this time employing the plunger. The solo voice was set against an

ominous gospel choir and a country blues guitar seemed to be strumming its comments.

And the ballads: the voice pitched yearningly in the high register to produce landscapes of the strangest beauty. Some of the pieces had a certain teutonic (operatic?) quality of soloist versus orchestra in a seemingly inexhaustible number of different combinations: the grand organist, the barbershop quartet, the church choir, etc. But never with any cheap cleverness, always with total artistic integrity.

His chords strike a corresponding chord in the listener. He reminds us of the vocal tradition and "natural" harmony as opposed to that derived from the Western "tempered" scale. In so doing this great musician has captured the very essence of music.

ROLAND RAMANAN

## John Surman/Jack DeJohnette

LONDON  
QUEEN ELIZABETH HALL

ADDING UP the number of instruments that these two can play between them would give you at the very least a first-rate octet, and at times during this concert (the first of their country-wide tour) it felt as though that was what we were listening to. The evening's second half, for instance, kicked off with Surman setting a sequenced bass pattern going on one synth, then fitting half-notes around it until it felt suitably busy, and then adding spirals of soprano sax while DeJohnette fell in and out of the pre-set rhythm, leaving it tantalisingly unclear whether he was trying to bolster or dismantle it. At its best the tension between the inflexibility of the machines and the spontaneity of two living, listening musicians just about

kept the piece (and most of the gig) on its toes.

The music was ceaseless: gaps between numbers were kept to a minimum, and Surman even felt obliged to apologise for having an interval (on the management's insistence). Continuity seemed so important that DeJohnette, requiring, at one point, to move in mid-flow from his keyboard to his drumkit, covered the distance by stamping out a rhythm with his feet and adding manic offbeats by clapping his hands.

Perhaps this emphasis on continuity was meant to stop things sounding patchy, because the range of styles covered was dangerously wide. We had ponderous-sounding synthesiser duets, in which DeJohnette provided bass lines and harmonies while Surman took solos on a glockenspiel-style voicing; we had furious (but too lengthy) sax/drum workouts; a long, lovely dialogue between piano and soprano; some pseudo-oriental stuff for gamelan (DeJohnette's synth) and recorder, which prompted the guy behind me to whisper to his partner, "This is just musak, isn't it?"; and, for those who stayed around for the encore (QE Hall audiences often don't, for some reason) a piano and baritone duet of disarming simplicity and lyricism.

The effect of so much variety, unfortunately, was to make it an evening memorable mainly for individual highlights and individual talents. Surman keeps overturning our expectations of each instrument, producing gorgeous melodic lines on the bass clarinet and even using the soprano sax, occasionally, to play bass lines for DeJohnette's piano solos (which were as lightfingered as Chick Corea but more searching and articulate). And at the drums, of course, DeJohnette was amazing to

watch, coaxing breathtaking dynamic changes out of his kit (like stopping the cymbals dead with his fingers and then carrying on without missing a beat). I just had the sense that the format of 20–40-minute improvisations was more of a vehicle for showcasing these talents than it was the expression of a mutual musical philosophy. It seemed that even after two hours, we still didn't really know what made them tick.

JONATHAN COE

## Sergei Kuryokhin's Pop Mechanics

LIVERPOOL  
ST GEORGE'S HALL

LIVERPOOL's Bluecoat Arts Centre and Ark (an organisation inspired by Russian futurism at its most populist and optimistic) have been preparing this concert for two years, but Kuryokhin broadcasts a Reagan speech saying such things should be organised overnight. Listening to canned Reagan in front of a giant painting of Mikhail Gorbachev, sipping Russian lager by the side of Liverpool's Lord Mayor – Kuryokhin is evidently not phased by contradictions.

Goats and cows tethered outside lent a circus-comes-to-town excitement to the buzzing queue: chaotic door-policy set the nerves on edge. The organisers – knowing from videos and news reports of the materials Kuryokhin likes – managed to lay out the cultural wealth of Liverpool before him. Kuryokhin has the panache and impatience and brutality of the great collageists, and it was his evident delight in the musics offered him that made the two-and-a-half-hour concert cohere. There were no announcements, no context supplied for the participants – a welcome ab-

ALBERT MANGELSDORFF *lets it slide*. Photo by ANDREW POTHECARY.



ence of the conventional media patronism.

Kuryokhin opened with a solemn hymn on the St George's Hall organ – Sergei "Africa" Bugayev, painter and performance provocateur, dressed as a soldier, saluting the flag. Guitarists from Echo & The Bunnymen, It's Immortal and The Christians appeared, pouting and sulking as Kuryokhin conducted the brass section of the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic through some improvisation and the power switch was found. Then it was a massed guitar James Bond theme and some outstanding, slithery free tenor from Michael Kostyushkin, Bugayev pounding on some sheet metal debris. Over a Mancini-like "tension" track Lyapin (also one of Kuryokhin's crew – his heavy-metal posturing quite hilarious before the line of cool new-wave popstars) played some excellent wah-wah. This was grandiose and quite brilliant: Company meets Magma.

I haven't space to do more than list the other moments: Joe Spear's touchingly direct gospel singing, the bagpipes of the Irish Centre's Pipe Band and the squeeze boxes of the Bootle Concertina Band (the presence of Green and Orange being an anti-sectarian celebration in itself); the artists eating flowers and beating Kuryokhin with them as he sang a Tiny Tim falsetto to Dimitrius' lute; the African drumming of Rhythmic Stress; Jean Gordon-Brown singing opera as a Liverpool karate expert got Bugayev in a headlock.

Far from employing eclectic "post-modern" representation, Kuryokhin remains true to the

original surrealist project: he alerts the citizen to the wonders of the city, tearing down the veils of regularity and order. The seamless flow he made of disparate ingredients was as impossible as it was implausible, but real.

BEN WATSON

## Lontano

LONDON  
ST JOHN'S SMITH SQUARE

IT LOOKED on the face of it an unlikely permutation: Odaline de la Martinez, the most exuberantly open and "Latin" of contemporary repertoire conductors, paired with Kaija Saariaho, the most reticently "northern" of composers.

An entire programme of Saariaho's music, such as the one she devised for St John's, reveals very quickly that her reticence is less introversion ("The Lonely Finn" was an unfortunate title, bound to be read psychologically rather than meaning unfettered by ideologies or schools) than an economy and intelligence of means. Her work with computer electronics, dating from the early 1980s, allowed her to control for the first time all the trajectories of a piece – pulse, pitch, tone colour, harmonics – according to a single structural parameter, something that isn't possible to anything like the same extent with conventional instrumentation.

A title like "Jardin Secret" underscores her reputation for almost clandestine expression. Wrongly; for it's very clear from the opening moments of the 1985 tape piece "Jardin Secret I" that we are not excluded, that the garden is, in fact, all around us. *Musique Concrete* is one of the great underground streams of the modern movement, at once too literal and too abstract for sus-

tained use. It bubbles up here filtered and purified.

"Jardin Secret II" darkens the shadows a little. A tape-programme of harpsichord sounds and voice makes a background for live harpsichord and creates an astonishing interplay that suggests the garden is suddenly, ambiguously peopled.

Anyone who has seen the Northern Lights suddenly swoop across the sky will have wondered at their silence. "Lichtbogen" provides the aurora with its lonely music, a diffracted harmony subject to sudden fractures and equally unexpected sustains. "Lacanisme de l'Aile" is through the other end of the telescope. The instrumental forces are reduced to one (Lontano co-founder Ingrid Culliford) on a softly ring-modulated flute. As the invocatory text ends, the pinions shake and take flight. Messiaen records the song; Saariaho, the plumage.

With "Io", the ambiguities of scale coincide. Orchestral in impact, it sustains an oscillation between near and distant, the inward, intimate "I" and the far-off satellite of Jupiter. There is a mythological reading, too, best not psychologised or spelt out, but hinting at a new and yielding accommodation.

BRIAN MORTON

## Diamanda Galas

LONDON  
QUEEN ELIZABETH HALL

THE BODY, the fragile base on which disease is built, appears nowhere more frail and mortal than in the skeletal figure of Diamanda Galas. Her remarkable voice teeters on the very edge of vocal suicide, a scream married to a phantom (of the opera?) who pushes its well-manicured modulations way beyond the decent limits of biological endurance. The

sound veers from a high point to a parched and crackling vibrato, hung like a fog around the chromium larynx that once worked with Xenakis and has now reunited classical training with the modern world in a most singular way.

*The Masque Of The Red Death* is a mass to those now stricken, and those already taken, by the HIV virus. A plague document that fashions a blasted geography together from the swollen texts of the Old Testament, the soaking anaesthetic of Baudelaire and the redemption swing of the South. Hijacking theistic language into a composite monster of truly apocalyptic fury, Galas points us down the road towards the twilight of civilisation.

Galas presents an all-out war in which those afflicted with the virus must first pass through mandatory testing and indefinite detention before death carries them off. It's against these self-appointed social "cleansers" that the most effective sections of the Masque are addressed.

The American Church has fragmented into a plethora of creeds, confused and confusing, whose hope in resurrection extends in equal parts to Jesus Christ and Elvis Presley. A powerful and loosely-grouped army of homophobes struggling for possession of religious language itself.

The death-knell drum, whose clockwork precision never really subsides throughout the whole performance, serves as the hammer in Galas' witchhunt against those who have appropriated religious belief for political ends. A series of cathartic outbursts from the stage/pulpit/prison cell ends with an impassioned reading of Nerval's *Artemis*: "White roses fall! You offend our gods. Fall white phantoms from your burning heaven – the saint of the pit is stronger in my eyes!"

RUSSELL LACK

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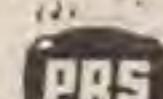
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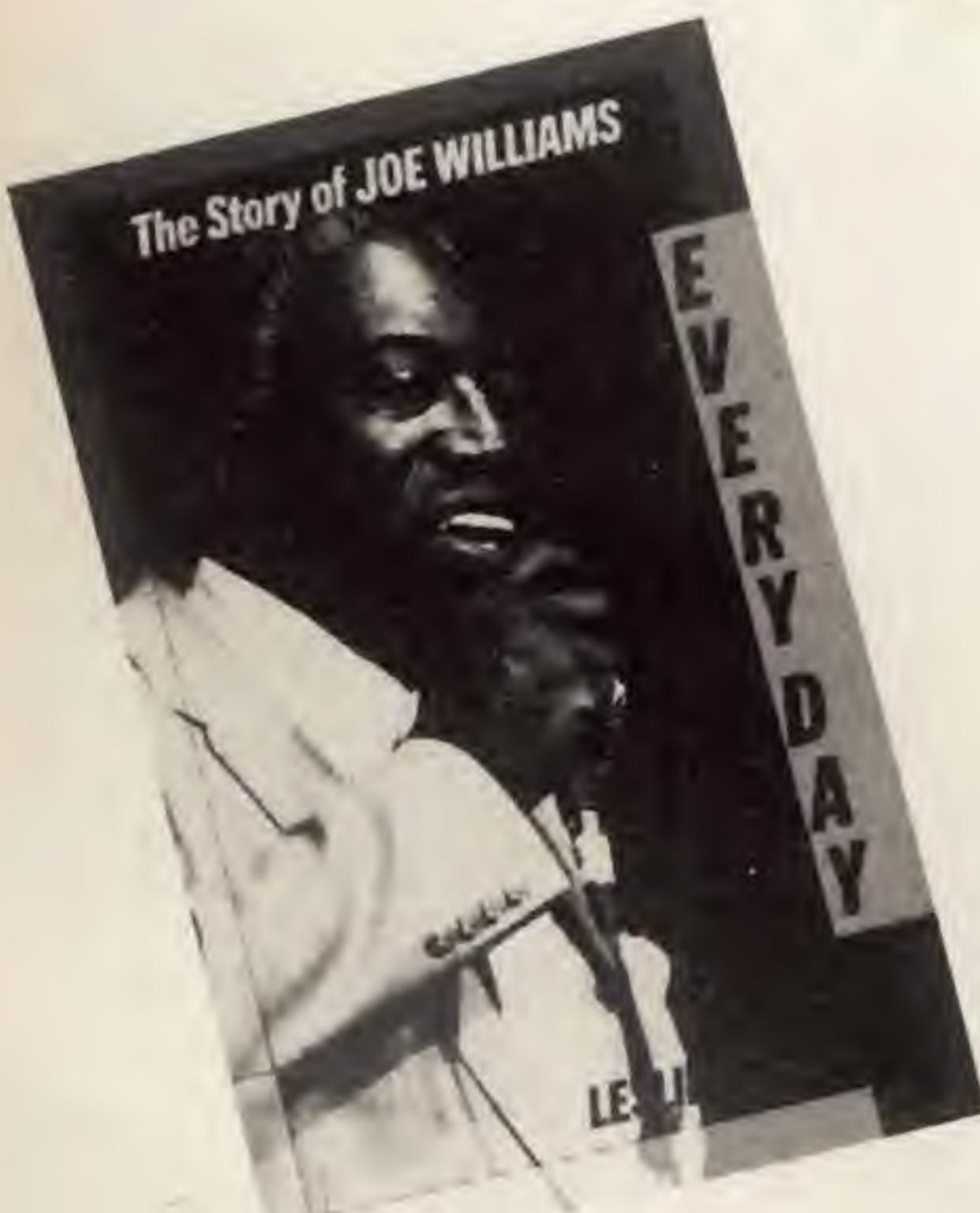
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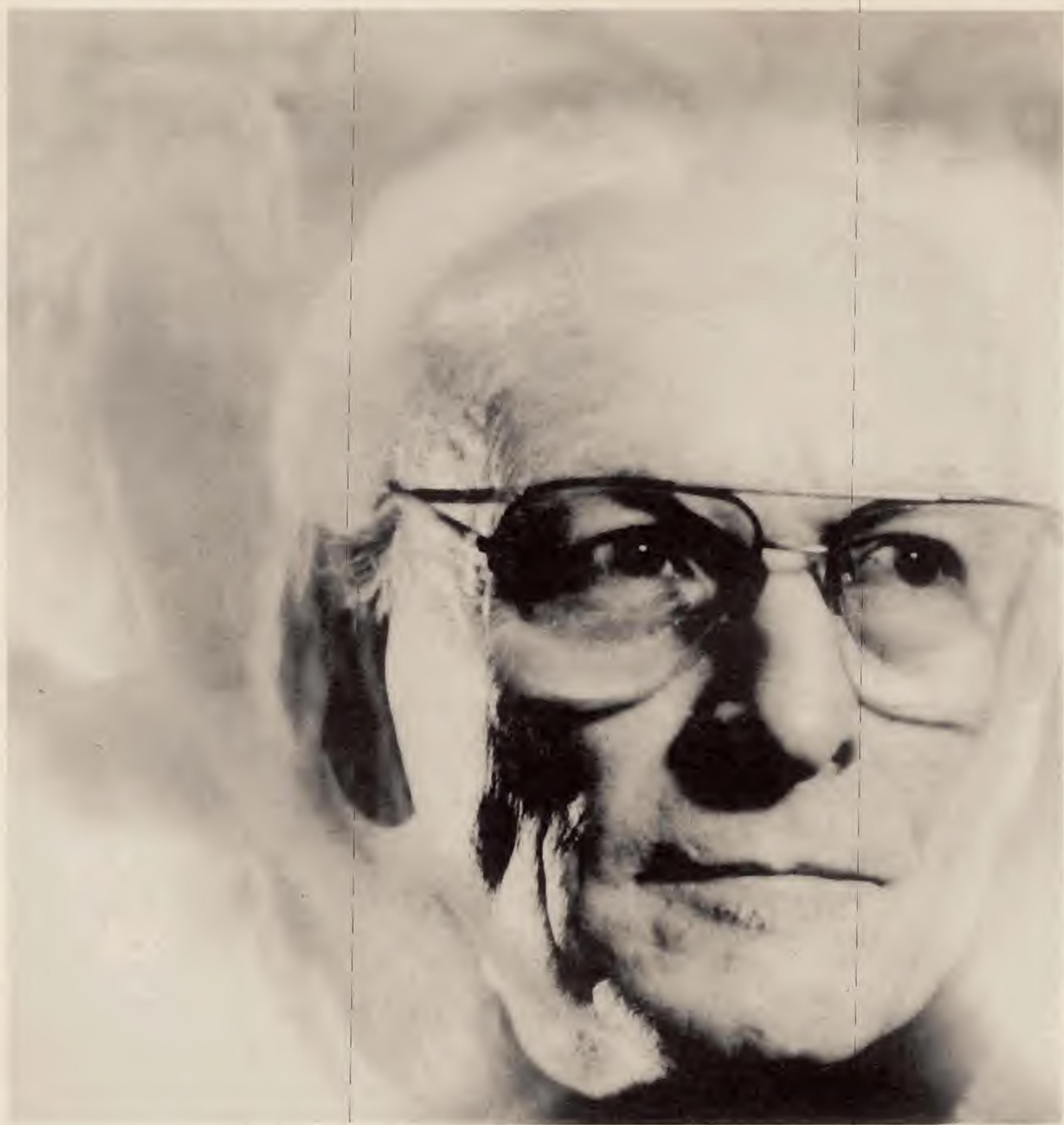
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## coming in

*Jimmy Giuffre's belief in "soft jazz" led to a 25-year exile from the*

*recording studio which has only recently ended. Graham Lock meets a*

*man who dares to be quiet. Photo by Nick White.*

## from the cool

SOMEONE MUST have been telling lies about Jimmy G for without him doing anything wrong his career was arrested one fine morning.

Club-owners shunned him; record companies didn't want to know him; compositions gathered dust on his shelf. From being a successful, acclaimed musician he found himself edged farther and farther from the scene until, finally, he had to take a teaching job to pay the rent. Without a trial, without charges being brought, Jimmy G was sentenced to silence.

The silence has lasted, give or take a brief interruption, for 25 years. He's 67 now, a slight, almost frail figure with thinning white hair (a tuft of which perches, Dizzy-style, beneath his lower lip); a solicitous, softly-spoken man whose careful, chewed-over words tail into inaudibility and reveal less than the subtle language of his eyes, one moment glinting with humour the next measuring you with a steely glance.

Ask him what he thinks lay behind that Kafkaesque blackballing a quarter of a century ago and he'll say, with a mild shrug, "Well, I got into the free jazz." Long pause. "And I didn't use any drums." Long pause. "So . . . some people didn't think it was jazz."

Ah. Someone must have called the *Jazz Police*.

CENSORSHIP BY definition – "You can't do that, it isn't *Jazz*!" – has been the bane of innovative musicians from James P. Johnson to Anthony Braxton; but few can have suffered from its effects quite so comprehensively as Jimmy Giuffre, for whom, as he puts it, "the doors closed" in 1963. In the nine years prior to '63 he made 15 LPs as leader, in the 25 years since he's made just four. (This is what can happen when you tangle with the *Jazz Police*.)

Born 26 April 1921 in Dallas, Texas, Giuffre began playing clarinet at nine, tenor at 14 and by 21 had received his Bachelor of Music degree. He continued to study composition for ten years with Dr Wesley La Violette (to whom he still refers as "my teacher") and, after a brief period with a symphony orchestra, turned to jazz in the mid-1940s, playing with various big bands

and achieving early fame as the composer of "Four Brothers", the tune made popular by Woody Herman's Herd. Though capable of playing in the honking R&B style for which Texas tenors were renowned, Giuffre found himself more attracted to the "cool" school of jazz then forming on the West Coast, which was derived from the quieter, more-rhythmically-relaxed style of Lester Young.

Based in Los Angeles in the early 50s Giuffre became an influential figure in this burgeoning West Coast scene, notably as a member of Shorty Rogers' Giants; though it was on two LPs with drummer Shelly Manne that his penchant for experiment first caught the ear: on 1953's *The West Coast Sound* the brief, atonal "Fugue" displayed his interest in avant-garde composition, while "Abstract No 1" from 1954's *The Three & The Two* was one of the earliest recorded examples of completely spontaneous free improvisation. Soon given the chance to record his own albums, Giuffre began to question almost every facet of jazz orthodoxy: *Tangents In Jazz* (1955) has a rhythm section which doesn't play regular rhythm and often doesn't play at all ("I've come to feel increasingly inhibited and frustrated by the insistent pounding of the rhythm section," he declared at the time); while his debut LP for Atlantic, *The Jimmy Giuffre Clarinet* (1956), pursued his fascination with sound-texture through eight tracks of diverse, highly original instrumentations that included woodwind quintet, clarinet/celesta duo and solo clarinet with foot-tapping. His clarinet tone was remarkable too, delving into the lower registers to achieve what one critic called "a thick, soft, nightish sound".

His second Atlantic LP, *The Jimmy Giuffre 3*, initiated the series of trio recordings for which he is probably still best-known. The first trio comprised Jim Hall (guitar), Ralph Pena (bass) and Giuffre himself on clarinet, tenor and baritone saxes. Though apparently the next logical step after the rhythm-experiments of *Tangents In Jazz*, Giuffre tells me that the decision to go drummerless was partly force of circumstances.

"It came out of Debussy, actually, that Jim Hall group," he recalls in his quiet manner. "Debussy's sonata for flute, viola and

## Jimmy Giuffre

harp. So Jim was the harp, Ralph the viola and I was the flute. I'd been looking for someone who could play great drums and also wanted to play more of a chamber-type music – and it was hard. I couldn't find a drummer interested in playing softly, in listening and resting. So I heard this Debussy piece, I liked it, and I thought, well, why not the three of us."

The absence of drums led to mutterings among the more hidebound elements of the jazz community, but these were drowned out by the popular acclaim for "The Train And The River", the LP's closing track, which became a surprise hit. To a degree, the song's deft interlacing of catchy folk themes, the nimble dance of three melodic lines across wide-open spaces, typified the trio's music of the mid- to late 50s, even though their instrumentation underwent a further radical change when valve-trombonist Bob Brookmeyer replaced Ralph Pena.

These were busy years for Giuffre: he guested with the MJQ, wrote arrangements for Lee Konitz and Sonny Stitt, recorded his own notated works with Gunter Schuller and Orchestra USA and even made an album (*Four Brothers*) on which he overdubbed four tenor parts, thus anticipating the saxophone quartet by nearly 20 years. However the trio remained his central activity, through excellent LPs like *Trav'lin' Light* (with Hall and Brookmeyer), *7 Pieces* (with bassist Ray Brown replacing Brookmeyer) and *The Easy Way* (with Red Mitchell replacing Brown on bass). Then came a slight hiccup – two LPs at the turn of the decade found him adding a drummer to the group and seemingly uncertain of his direction: *Ad Lib* was a blowing album, *In Person* a live LP – before he formed a new trio early in 1961 with Paul Bley (piano), Steve Swallow (bass), and suddenly began to play the most adventurous music of his career.

IT WAS almost certainly his three LPs with Bley and Swallow which made Jimmy Giuffre a marked man in the eyes of the Jazz Police.

"I started getting more daring in my recording," he asserts softly. "I started with *Fusion*, then *Thesis*, then I let everything go on *Free Fall* – there's no time, there's no key, no metre. We just . . . I found the right people to play with, that listen to each other and aren't greedy. Everybody got plenty of room to play."

To what extent were these freedoms influenced by the innovations of Ornette Coleman and Cecil Taylor?

"I wasn't copying Ornette or Cecil Taylor. I mean, I got something from them, but my music . . . my approach has never been about fitting to what other people are doing. I don't know whether it's good or bad or what, but I've always tried to put my stamp on it – playing and writing."

"*Free Fall*, that group sort of evolved from . . . Paul and Carla were always after me to write more abstract music . . ." He hesitates a moment, suspicious of the terminology. "Well, call it abstract."

The music is more abstract, but the freedoms explored on those last trio LPs represent a logical evolution from Giuffre's previous recordings and exemplify – as does his entire *œuvre* – the credo first quoted on the *Clarinet* LP sleeve: "It has been said that when jazz gets soft it loses its gusto and funkiness. It is my

feeling that soft jazz can retain the basic flavour and intensity that it has at a louder volume and at the same time perhaps reveal some new dimensions of feeling that loudness obscures."

Ironically, it may be Jimmy Giuffre's quietness (musical and personal) which has caused us to overlook the more revolutionary elements of his music. Comparisons with Taylor and Coleman perhaps seem a little absurd; yet Taylor and Giuffre were two of the first people in the 1950s to question the tyranny of the stated beat (and came up with diametrically opposite solutions), while Coleman and Giuffre turned to melody as an alternative to bebop's improvising over the chord changes pretty much contemporaneously. Bley, who had played with Coleman shortly before joining Giuffre's trio, may have been a catalyst; but Giuffre's stress on the melodic line is evident from his earliest recordings and, he says, originated in the teachings of Dr La Violette.

"His basic phrase was that the harmony is the result of the line. That is, unlike the opposite approach where you fit the melody to the given chords, the line creates its own harmony. You just write with the intervals in mind, either resolved or unresolved, and you learn how to juxtapose those together, co-ordinating the lines so that they can all be heard."

This emphasis on the line led Giuffre to suggest, as early as the mid-50s, that the instrumental parts in his trio were interchangeable – ie, that all the lines were equal: a concept of ensemble democracy well ahead of its time, and which came to fruition on *Fusion* and *Thesis*, two of the most perfectly-integrated and beautifully-realised small-ensemble recordings in all creative music. (Though perhaps not in *Jazz* because as Martin Williams' sleeve notes to *Thesis* concede, "On the surface, at least, this music may not always sound conventionally like jazz.") However, let me quote his conclusion too: "But only jazzmen of the skill of these players could improvise with such technical and emotional freedom, and yet make such cohesive and effective music." Quite.) Giuffre, Bley and Swallow weave superbly intricate, intuitive patterns together, creating a richly reflective music that, for all its softness, remains intense, disciplined and rigorously honest. If the absence of conventional rhythm is what made these LPs seem so odd at the time, it's probably that which makes them sound so fresh and contemporary today. No other group from the early 60s (with the possible exception of the Cecil Taylor Unit) managed to do away with all the props and still achieve such a serene balance of form and freedom.

Verve, his label in the late 50s, rewarded Giuffre in the customary manner of record companies – by not renewing his contract. So the trio's final LP, *Free Fall* (1963), appeared on CBS; not that CBS deserve any kudos either.

"Teo Macero got behind that and made it happen," Giuffre murmurs. "But it was out of the catalogue again in three months . . ." It was, he adds, his favourite album. Available for three months; unavailable for 25 years.

*Free Fall* takes a step beyond *Fusion* and *Thesis*, the most free and abstract of the lot. It also shakes up the format with a mixture of solo, duo and trio tracks. The latter two are the

## Jimmy Giuffre

expected seamless blend of composed and improvised, but the solo tracks – all for Giuffre's clarinet – are free improvisations. Had he, I enquire, been trying to develop a new language for solo clarinet?

He nods. "Yeah. At that same time I wrote a quintet – for clarinet and string quartet. I played it at the Library of Congress in Washington. That piece had a cadenza I played which was all improvised." He shoots me a rueful glance. "I've got a couple of those pieces . . . they don't have much chance of ever getting done."

There seems to be enormous hostility towards compositions by people from the jazz field, I say. Presumably your pieces have fallen victim to the same prejudice?

"Well," he mutters, eyes gimlet-sharp, "I don't see anybody rushin' to do 'em."

AFTER *FREE Fall* came the freeze-out: Giuffre was not able to record again for nearly ten years. The man who'd been a leader of the West Coast "cool" school found himself cold-shouldered by the music business; run out of town by the *Jazz Police* for not playing loud'n'sweaty enough.

A brief flurry of activity in the early 70s – two LPs under his own name, two with Paul Bley on the latter's Improvising Artists label – was followed by almost a decade more of silence before the two 1980s Soul Note LPs, *Dragonfly* and *Quasar*, which have signalled his partial return to musical activity. Despite a late conversion to electricity – impressed by Weather Report, Giuffre now uses electric bass and electronic keyboards in his current quartet – the Soul Note LPs display many of his characteristic qualities: delicate group interplay, acute attention to nuances of texture and timbre, a sense of spaciousness; the *rub* of thoughtful, intimate music. Yet neither these LPs nor his 70s albums are as far out as *Free Fall*. Had he taken a deliberate step back from the edge? Or did he feel he'd taken free music as far as he could with *Free Fall*?

"No, not exactly. But, you know, the doors closed, I didn't record for ten years. I kept trying different things. Far out is one thing, but I'm more interested in, hmm, *expanding*. I try to reach for a deeper meaning. The last two albums may not be as far out as *Free Fall*, but . . ." he tails off with a shrug. Then adds, "I have some recent tracks that indicate a new step, I think."

In what way?

"Well, they're not totally different but they reach into a kind of pathos, a sad feeling, almost like European classical . . . like Mussorgsky, that kind of dramatic quality. I . . ." he tails off again, frowning. Then, after a long pause, "It's pretty hard to describe music. I just try to write a classic every time I write. Whatever a classic is . . . something that has an indelible frame for it, it's clear, it's strong, it's confident. It need not be dissonance. The free-jazz thing, you can decide no or yes, just play free music, period: let the wind take it and your fingers flap. But straight-ahead, I mean things that are solid and done with total confidence, even though it's maybe not so unusual tonally or whatever, that can reach another dimension too."

Recent tracks like "Cool", "Moonlight" and "Spirits" certainly

sound clear, strong and confident to me; classics every one. It makes you wonder what Giuffre might have achieved had he been able to record and gig regularly. As it is, excepting the occasional film-score commission, teaching has been his major source of income for the last 20 years. This, not surprisingly, is a sore point.

Teaching is your chief occupation? I ask, less than tactfully.

"No, no. That's what's difficult . . ." For the first time in our conversation Giuffre sounds agitated. "People have a tendency to think that when a musician is caught teaching, he's retired. There's nothing . . ." He looks up at me abruptly: "Can you imagine why I teach?"

Er, in order to survive and pay the bills, I suppose.

"That's the number-one reason. If I didn't have to, if I had the means to survive without it, I wouldn't teach. I learn when I do teach, it's not a *loss*; it's just that there's only so much time in the day and I'd like to practise more, get more music done. I'm at a period now where, ah, the music is coming out a little slower. I can't sit down and just turn it right out."

He purses his lips reflectively. The room falls silent.

The amount of music lost to him, to us, in his 20-plus years of reluctant teaching is incalculable. Even now he has had to go to Italy, to the Soul Note label, to find someone willing to release his work. "The American companies have turned deaf ears to us," he says. "I sent tapes to the important labels, they told me they were over-budget." One consolation, at least, is that the attempt to squeeze Giuffre out of the history books has surely failed. His experiments with rhythm and line played their part in the music's evolution, and his concern with the nature of sound and its relationship to silence/space prefigured many of the structural advances made in the late 60s by the AACM. Now, with his two recent Soul Note LPs (a third is planned for later this year) rekindling interest in his previous work, a new generation of musicians is starting to acknowledge his influence: John Zorn, for instance, recently interviewed Giuffre on New York radio, and has cited the trio with Hall and Brookmeyer as a factor in his choice of Bill Frisell and George Lewis for the *News For Lulu* project.

Giuffre gives a slow, appreciative nod. "You're out on an island, you know," he muses. "I mean, unless you go to clubs or concerts every night, or buy records to figure out what so-and-so's doing, which I don't, you're out by yourself on an island, you're not really connected to anyone else, and it's interesting, and nice, to hear that someone is . . . doing something."

LATER, AS I'm packing away my tape recorder, I ask him if he feels any anger or bitterness at his treatment by the music business. He considers for a minute, then gives a wry smile.

"No," he says, a glint in his eye, "I guess I asked for it." My surprise must have shown, because he adds, "I mean, it's not as if I'm the ultimate musician. There's still a lot I want to learn. New things I want to try."

At which point a cough comes from inside the wardrobe and a voice clearly says, "Nothing *too* new I trust, Mr Giuffre."

The *Jazz Police* are still among us.



At LENNIE TRISTANO's studio, 15 August 1953: WARNE MARSH, tenor sax; PETER IND, bass; LENNIE TRISTANO, piano; AL LEAVITT, drums; and metronome. Photo by BOB PARENT, from the very wonderful JAZZ GIANTS, compiled by KABÉ (Columbus Books, £3.50).

## REQUIEM for LENNIE

---

*A decade after his death Lennie Tristano remains a jazz enigma – a pianist/composer who rarely recorded or performed in public, yet inspired a host of followers, from Warne Marsh to Bill Evans. Brian Priestley surveys the strange career and stranger music of the man, born 70 years ago this month, who also pioneered free improvisation.*

THE TRISTANO cult was always rather separatist. Not long ago in New York, a small gathering at the West End Cafe witnessed followers Lenny Popkin (tenor) and Connie Crothers (piano) paying their homage, accompanied by bassist Cameron Brown and daughter Carol Tristano on drums. Half a dozen of the faithful filled the front pew; otherwise there were two or three listeners alerted like me by the jazz radio station and a handful of heedless college students. The level of enthusiasm matched the attitude of the cafe's staff, who let me sit through a whole set without taking my order and allowed the band to compete with a radio in the adjoining bar.

Possibly the nearest that Tristano has come to being in the news during the whole ten years since his death was as a footnote to the making of the *Bird* movie. A couple of the Parker solos used on the soundtrack were originally on a private tape done in Lennie's apartment, from which the contributions of Kenny Clarke and the Tristano piano have been erased. As well as mutual admiration between Bird and the more cerebral Lennie, some of the posthumous tributes to him have been surprising, given his unfashionable aura these days. Max Roach contributed to the *Memorial Concert* album, and later did a duo album with the aforementioned Ms Crothers, a Tristano pupil. Anthony Braxton still intends to do a recording of Lennie's tunes, and has already done two by the prominent Tristano disciple, Warne Marsh. Saxist Paquito D'Rivera, who would seem to be at the opposite end of the emotional spectrum, recently recorded a piece called "A Lo Tristano" in which he and George Coleman emulate Lennie's writing for Marsh and colleague Lee Konitz.

The Tristano biography which the *Bird* tracks have failed to supplement is painfully small: only 40 78 rpm sides (plus alternate takes), all from 1946–51, and just three officially produced LPs. Plus (quite a bonus in the circumstances) some ten LPs' worth of outtakes and privately recorded archive material. This sparsity of output appears to mirror Lennie's general reputation as a man hard to get to know, and hard to get along with except by toeing his particular line. Certainly it reflects his mistrust of the record industry – the early work was all on small specialist labels, except for two brushes with major companies. Capitol at first refused to issue his freely-improvised "Intuition", threatening not to pay him for the session; after they relented, its companion piece "Digression" was delayed for several years, while one of his 40-year-old RCA tracks has just appeared for the

first time! As a result, in 1951 he became one of the earliest musicians to form his own label called, uncompromisingly, Jazz Records.

It would be unfair to say that he also became a recluse right away, but he did stay home teaching his students and made almost as few live appearances as issued records – from the mid-1950s onwards, the only club he would play was the Half Note and the only concerts he gave were on two brief trips to Europe. It's also unfair to say he became obsessed with technology, as that phrase is understood today – it was only a two-speed tape recorder – but he did some of the first serious experimentation with overdubbing. Not only the boppish conversations with himself on "Pastime" and "Ju-Ju", and the complex, multi-layered "Turkish Mambo" and "Descent Into The Maelstrom" (the latter, a couple of years before the earliest Cecil Taylor on disc, sounds at times uncannily like him), but also the affecting "Requiem" done right after the death of Parker. The anguished harmonies of its intro set up the slow strumming of two-handed blues chords over which an improvised solo is dubbed at half-speed so that, when played back at full speed, that clear edgy sound which Bird himself used can be obtained with a mere piano.

THE VIRTUES and faults of Tristano's music are writ large in his unaccompanied playing, which for someone of the bebop generation is a relatively high proportion of his recorded œuvre. His normal, unspeeded-up tone has been called cold, detached and brittle, and reminds me of nothing so much as a trained European pianist reading a jazz transcription with great accuracy but little idiomatic feeling. The constant rhythmic variety is alternately exhilarating and enervating, its impetus being more up-and-down than forward-moving. The early "(What Is) This Thing Called Love" hints that Lennie was not exaggerating when he claimed to be able to copy Tatum "with scandalous efficiency" (especially two spots in the second chorus which are harmonically conservative, for Lennie); but it also shows his reaching beyond Tatum and Bud Powell to be strained and self-consciously experimental. The strange, semi-atonal chords that permeate his work, even when playing behind others, aim for a constant level of carefully controlled tension, which would be dissipated by the intrusion of too many

## LENNIE TRISTANO

conventional voicings.

Of his immediate students, only Crothers seems to have retained this harmonic complexity, whereas his long and involved melody lines influenced not only his own circle but the work of Bill Evans and, through him, a whole generation of pianists including Keith Jarrett and all his followers. Although Miles Davis took the credit for telling Herbie Hancock to leave out the left-hand chords in the *Miles Smiles* period, the resultant rambling right hand sounds very Tristanoesque. You can also make a good case for his long-distance influence on horn players, especially those who continually double back rather than pause for breath, such as Coltrane and early Wayne Shorter. If you wrote out Eric Dolphy and did him on piano, in other words without his unique tone but with the convolutions of shape and timing, he would look a lot like Lennie.

Although it doesn't apply to any of the above, many different musicians of markedly different persuasion spent time studying with him, such as Bud Freeman, Bob Wilber, Phil Woods, Sheila Jordan and (according to Joachim Berendt) Joanne Brackeen. Part of the stimulus for them may have been Tristano's insistence on his pupils learning classic recorded solos (by such as Bird and Lester Young), and not playing the solos on their instrument initially but learning to sing them – a notably jazz-oriented approach (even if influenced by Indian music teaching) and one which ought to be much more widespread today. But part of the attraction also lay in Lennie's reputation for loosening people's blocks about their improvisational ability and his interest in psychiatry (hence Al Haig calling him "the witchdoctor"). Not only was his brother a professional analyst but our own Peter Ind, who spent several years working with the pianist and his acolytes, maintains that Lennie himself was well versed in the work of Wilhelm Reich.

All the musicians mentioned above, of course, would have existed without Tristano, but the same might not be true of either Lee Konitz or Warne Marsh. He was such a formative factor in their playing that, taken together, they are the best vindication of his teaching. Interestingly, as they each emerged from under his wing, they abandoned his stated ideal of horn players using a deadpan, unemotional tone – all the better to hear the choice of notes – but they both continued to base the architecture of their solos on his harmonic and rhythmic principles. A friend points out that many composer-teachers (such as Rameau, Bruckner and Schoenberg) passed on standard techniques rather than vouchsafe their own working methods, but Lennie's approach was at the other extreme and tended to produce Tristano clones. It was only in this sense that he was interested in experimenting with free jazz – not with musicians all expressing their own individuality simultaneously, but with collective improvisation by several little Lennies.

Virtually all his material, in fact, was based on a small number of 1920s and 1930s song standards, sometimes retaining the theme, sometimes improvising themelessly and sometimes creating original jazz tunes on the chords. For example "Indiana", played more or less straight on the *Live At Birdland* set, is also the basis for the fully improvised "Ju-Ju" (named after his wife

Judy) and "Deliberation" and for the Tristano tunes called "No Figs" and "Back Home", as well as for the Parker/Davis "Donna Lee" (the only jazz original he recorded that was not written within the Tristano group).

And, with one exception, everything was always played in 4/4 with lots of temporary metric variation or blurring of the barlines implied in the melodic line. Nothing wrong with that, of course, and it could just be seen as a rather dogged running into the ground of what Bird, Lester and others had already begun. But the thing that many listeners cannot forgive is Tristano's neutering of the rhythm section and particularly the drums. His own backing of soloists is often leaden in a way that Brubeck obviously found it hip to emulate, while his requirement for bassists was a fairly heavy accentuation on one and three. As to drummers, although those on later live recordings such as Art Taylor, Paul Motian and Nick Stabulas are almost demonstrative, Lennie actually preferred and in his early days got drummers who discreetly marked time – and that's all. On "Turkish Mambo" he even went so far as to record himself with a metronome(!), which might just possibly be an unspoken tribute to the magazine of that name that praised him so extravagantly, but it makes the modern drum-machine sound positively vital and musical by comparison.

TRISTANO'S MUSIC was sufficiently of its time to have acquired by now the respectability of age. Even if "period charm" is not exactly the phrase that comes to mind most readily, his determinedly different style has some of the quaint wrongheadedness of some other specifically white developments, such as Stan Kenton's. And certainly his attempt at "white bebop" has more going for it than the oh-so-palatable West Coast stuff that stole the limelight soon after. Much of what he achieved remains fascinating and, in "Requiem" alone, the dramatic tension between his input and that of the jazz tradition is deeply moving.

### RECORD GUIDE

Tristano can be heard with Charlie Parker on Spotlite 107 and 108 (broadcast) and Braba BB-01 (Metronome All Stars, including "No Figs" without Parker, and the RCA solo tracks). "Intuition" and "Digression" are on Affinity AFF 149, and the remaining 78 rpm records are collected on Mercury 830 921-2 and Raretone 5008-FC plus four tracks on Prestige P 24081. "Pastime", "Ju-Ju" and "Descent Into The Maelstrom" are on East Wind EW 8040/Inner City IC 6002. The album containing "Turkish Mambo" and "Requiem", plus *The New Tristano* including "Deliberation", were reissued as Atlantic SD 2-7003. The earliest Tristano demo recordings including "(What Is) This Thing Called Love" – some of which is transcribed in *Jazz Piano 3* (IMP Ltd) – are on Jazz Guild 1008/Phontastic NOST 7635; four of these, with different titles, are added to the *Live At Birdland* set (containing "Indiana") on Jazz JR-1. "Back Home" is on Jazz JR-5, and "Donna Lee" (with Art Taylor) on Atlantic SD 2-7006. Broadcasts with Paul Motian and Nick Stabulas (previously on labels such as Bombasi and Richelieu) are reissued with better sound on Jazz JR-6. Add *New York Improvisations* (with Peter Ind) on Elektra 96-0264-1 and the Bill Harris All Stars on Jazz Showcase 5001, and that's the sum total of Tristano on disc.



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## hard core zorn

Sex! Violence! Custard pies! It's thrills galore as "Mad" John Zorn **thrashes** Ornette, **mangles** Marsalis, **whips** the Kronos quartet. But **who** is the messenger from Planet Tharg? And **why** are Graham Lock's trousers on fire? **Now read on.**

(*Zornography* by Coneyl Jay)

\*

### zornette!

"IT'S LIKE waking up in HELL," John Zorn chuckles gleefully. "Pretty scary."

It is his latest project — an LP of Ornette Coleman tunes performed in the thrash style of hardcore rock (ie short, fast, loud) by Zorn and Tim Berne (altos), Mark Dresser (acoustic bass), Joey Baron and Michael Vacher (drums).

"There're 20 songs on the record," says Zorn, "of which seven or eight are one minute long, several more about two and a couple maybe three. The first side has 11 songs; it just doesn't stop, it's like WHAM! from beginning to end."

Zorn, I should add, *likes* Ornette's music: the LP comes to praise him, not to bury him in noise.

"I think it's truly in the Ornette tradition — it's kinda like Prime Time and the older musics, yet it goes somewhere even further than that. I think, if anybody, Ornette will dig it. But because it's so extreme I think we'll get controversy. A lot of people are really gonna hate what we've done."

Zorn says he's been playing Ornette tunes since he took up the saxophone, but it wasn't until he met Tim Berne six years ago that he performed them in public. Hearing a melodic trait in Berne's playing that reminded him of Ornette, and spurred by a feeling that Ornette's compositions had been neglected, Zorn suggested they play a few concerts of Coleman's music.

To begin with they played "in Ornette's early-60s style — do the head, each take a solo, then do the head again", but turned to Ornette's bluesier pieces as Zorn became fascinated by the R&B element in the music, then moved into "a free jazz, dixieland,

collective-improvisation kind of approach" when Zorn, dissatisfied with his alto playing, asked Berne if they could "just blow together" rather than solo separately.

Finally, a growing obsession with hardcore groups like Napalm Death and The Stupids led Zorn to "take that approach with the Ornette material, doing it faster and faster, shorter and shorter, to make it even more powerful and on the edge".

It sounds, I say to (*the wiry, bespectacled, 35-year-old, New York-born and -based*) Zorn, as if the music developed first from within, then had the hardcore format imposed on it from outside.

"NO," Zorn (*whose adolescent grin and penchant for provocative statements disguise a formidable musical mind*) bristles. "Even though we do one-minute versions of those songs, we're still relating all our material to the original melodies, which is the way Ornette works. We take fragments of melody, motifs, and toss 'em back 'n' forth between the horns — only it's very concise, very compressed, so it becomes like a BARRAGE of sound!"

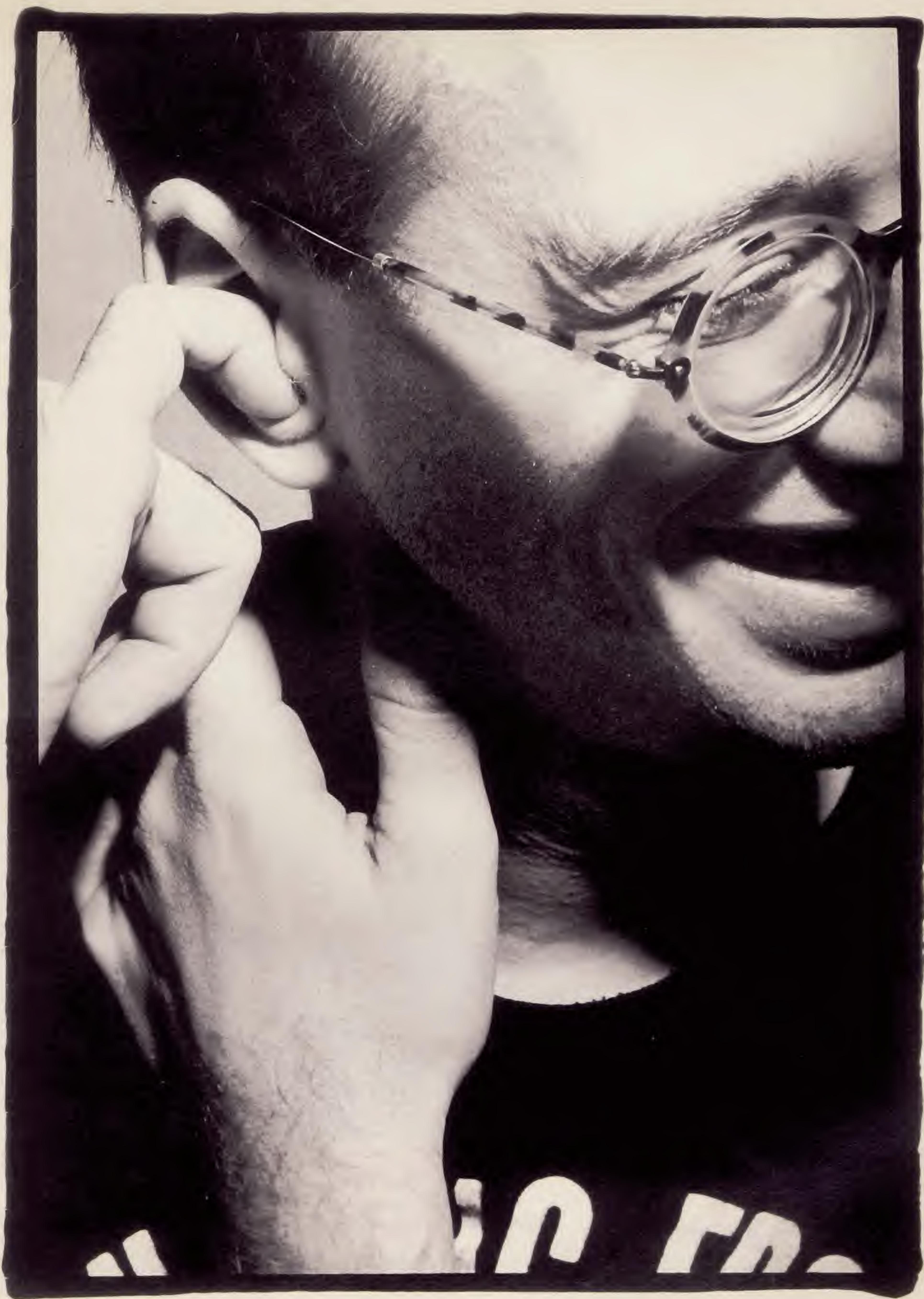
The LP covers the span of Coleman compositions: tracks include "The Disguise" and "Chippie" from his first Contemporary LP, "Blues Connotation", "C&D" and "WRU" from the Atlantic era, "New York Is Now" from the Blue Note period, "Mob Job" from the *Song X* LP with Pat Metheny plus "Feet Music" and "Peace Warriors" from 1987's *In All Languages*.

"The compositions are STRONG," asserts Zorn (*whose early musical background was in the classical field — he cites Charles Ives, Harry Partch and John Cage among his first heroes*). "That's the genius of Ornette, his compositions stand the test of time, 100%."

Did you deal with harmolodics? I (*chubby, bearded, 40-year-old Devonian*) ask.

"Not at all. Because ultimately . . . Ornette wanted to teach one of his new players — an acoustic, classical-guitarist — what harmolodics was, so he said to him 'OK, play any piece you know, any classical piece, and I'll show you what harmolodics is — just play it straight through and I'll play along'. So they did that, and at the end they stopped and Ornette said, 'Well, that's what harmolodics is!' Zorn (*who has {a} a sore throat; {b} to leave for the airport in 35 minutes*) laughs delightedly. "And that's what it is, it's Ornette playing along — it's his ear, his sensibility."

*Sure (I mutter, as I transcribe the tape) and relativity was just*





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Einstein's way of looking at things.

Back in real time, Zorn (who first caught the ear of the jazz world by blowing saxophones and duck calls into buckets of water) is stressing there was no attempt to copy Ornette: the aim was to find a new approach that "would be more faithful to the way he put his music together" by provoking a sense of outrage comparable to that which had greeted Ornette in the 1950s.

"In 1973 someone described a record of his to me as 'one long squeak'. I mean, what are they talking about! He *never* squeaks his reed – it's melody from beginning to end. So it took a long time for people to get used to it . . . there was a real *shock* value to his music when it first came out and I wanted that kind of edge, that shock, to be there on my record too –"

(Thinks: *But Ornette didn't set out to shock people . . .*)

"– like a PUNCH in the face."

Ouch! End of round one.

### zornithology

(ZORN! IT'S a great name. I muse, staring into space: like a character in an SF novel – "The messenger from Planet Tharg is here, my lord Zorn" – or an exclamation in a comic-strip – "Holy Zorn! My trousers are on fire!" Zorn did study cartoon music in college, is a big fan of Carl Stalling, Scott Bradley . . . Ho hum, back to transcribing.)

Meanwhile, back at the interview:

"A couple of people have said, oh look, he's a REVISIONIST! But, I mean. What, have I been making a career out of this? Two records out of 15 or so . . . OK, the Ornette LP would be the third, but people are not gonna call that *revisionist*, they're gonna call it COMPLETE MADNESS!"

And Zorn cackles insanely.

I'd remarked that several recent projects – the Ornette LP, the Sonny Clark tribute LP (*Voodoo*), the *News For Lulu* CD (featuring compositions by Clark, Kenny Dorham, Hank Mobley and Freddy Redd) plus the mish-mash repertoire of his ersatz-sleaze pop group Naked City – suggest Zorn is currently stuck in a mid-50s/mid-60s time-warp.

"No, no. I've always loved this music.. And I'm a record collector: if I hear a record that's great, one of my biggest pleasures is to play it for someone, to say 'wow, this is great – check it out'. I think that's the attitude which is behind those records. Plus, they're all approached in different ways: *News For Lulu* is not traditional bebop."

*Lulu* – Zorn (alto), Bill Frisell (guitar), George Lewis (trombone) – is my favourite Zorn project of the last few years. Paying respect to some beautiful hard-bop tunes, Zorn and cohorts revitalise and reinvent the tradition without recourse to irony or imitation – but with thanks, in part, to the unlikely co-inspiration of Jimmy Giuffre and Husker Dü. It was Giuffre's 1950s trio of Jim Hall and Bob Brookmeyer which influenced Zorn's choice of musicians; Husker Dü's hardcore terseness which affected his choice of format.

"So it wasn't solo, solo, trade fours, head at the end etc. I said, we're all blowing all of the time – no soloists, everybody plays whatever they want whenever they want, and we do *short*

versions. It seemed to make sense. *Taking* the music somewhere rather than just REGURGITATING it."

It works too, no small thanks to the trio's sensitivity and self-discipline. Still, I remark, your attitude to the jazz tradition seems diametrically opposed to that of, say, Wynton Marsalis.

Red rag to a bull!

"Yeah!" Zorn's up and swinging. "There's an attitude where the jazz past is like a *museum*. You know, those guys are doing it so much like it was originally done, there is literally *no point* in them doing it. It's PATHETIC. That attitude . . . I think it's racist in a certain way."

Racist? How's it racist?

"Anything that excludes other interpretations or other forms of expression is, I think, racist."

It may be narrow-minded, retrogressive, priggish and dumb; but I'm not sure it's *racist*.

Zorn shrugs. "I use race as a metaphor for almost everything. Someone who likes only country music and doesn't like blues or likes only classical and doesn't listen to rock – to me, that's racism. It's just the way I think, I'm sorry."

Hmm, the way I think, Zorn (who has to leave for the airport in 23 minutes) is obscuring a potentially valid insight by his gung-ho, Humpty Dumpty use of language. Cultural prejudice is not necessarily the same as racism, is it?

"Anyway," he rasps, "I don't like Marsalis's music and I think the approach we take with the same kind of music is much more faithful, because *we* bring it to LIFE."

Splat! End of round two.

### zorn free

"PRETTY WEIRD stuff, huh? Hard to believe," laughs Zorn – who apparently fancies himself as a real *wackhead* – when I explain I've only heard bits and pieces from his early records, many of which are now impossible to find. This is a shame because, *Voodoo* and *Lulu* apart, much of his best alto playing comes on LPs like his solo, two-part *The Classic Guide To Strategy*, his meetings with trombonist Jim Staley on *OTB* and *Mumbo Jumbo*, and the trio LP *Yankees*, with Derek Bailey and George Lewis, one of the finer records of 1980s free improvisation.

A shame too because it means the majority of his celebrated "game pieces" – like "Archery", "Hockey", "Lacrosse" – have slipped into oblivion. It's probably the game pieces – structured improvisation contexts, each of which follows particular and complex sets of rules and/or systems, designed to allow every participant a degree of control in how the piece develops – which most clearly reveal Zorn's enormous (and acknowledged) debt to the AACM, particularly to the restructuralist strategies of artists like Anthony Braxton and Roscoe Mitchell.

On recent LPs such as *The Big Gundown* and *Spillane*, Zorn has turned more to various compositional methodologies, fleshing out his carefully-plotted infrastructures with the help of the Lower East Side radical rock/improviser crew he's hung out with for the last ten, 15 years: eg, Polly Bradfield, Bill Frisell, Fred Frith, Shelley Hirsch, Wayne Horvitz, Arto Lindsay, Christian





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to Brooklyn's funky  
M-Base sounds,  
Robin Eubanks is  
sliding his trombone  
into all corners  
of modern music.  
Karen Bennett raises  
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hip  
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NOBODY'S GOING to pigeon-hole Robin Eubanks. One minute he's up there leading a guided tour of the valley of tears as he snarls and sobs through "You Don't Know What Love Is" with Art Blakey growling "get mad!" behind him. The next day, his trombone does the equivalent of an aerobic workout on an M-Base foray with his roommate Steve Coleman. After that, maybe some free-form eloquence touring with Dave Holland. And if you're thoroughly confused by this chain of events, pick up his new album, *Different Perspectives*. But don't expect to resolve anything.

We are, after all, talking about someone who grew up listening to both his uncle, Ray Bryant, and Led Zeppelin; did his apprenticeship with Slide Hampton; worked some gigs with Sun Ra; spent three years on Broadway; toured with Stevie Wonder, then landed a spot as musical director for Blakey's current crew of Jazz Messengers. Versatile is a nice word to use in a case like this. Astute is probably better.

Eubanks' first album as a leader was designed with a broad-base marketing concept in mind. In his liner notes, he cites his wide range of musical experience, then issues this caveat: "I'm sure that some people will critique this recording as being devoid of concept and too varied. However, that variety is the concept, with the common thread of (hopefully) good music holding it together." But there was method involved in determining what music Eubanks would use so variously to represent himself.

"I knew," he says, "that Japan was really into standards, so I included 'Walkin'' and 'You Don't Know What Love Is'; and the U.S. is more pop or commercially oriented, so I did a Stevie Wonder tune which I really like. Then there's this 'Quiet Storm' kind of programme they have on the West Coast . . . kind of laidback, after work, chillin', sipping wine after dinner or something, I don't know what the hell they do, I don't work! So 'The Night Before' is geared to that. And 'Midtown' is kind of funk. And then Europe is just wide open for anything. So I designed it so it would have some kind of appeal for those three markets. I think it's kind of unusual for somebody to do that."

*Different Perspectives* is an unusual compilation. Eubanks' eagerness to bring The Trombone (we're talking history here) out of the shadows often overwhelms the album. There is a striking absence of other horns (aside from Coleman and Michael Mossman on the title cut; four trombones, including Slide, are featured on "Walkin'"), and their presence would be welcome. One can only hope that Eubanks' sense of personal dismay over having seen the trombone viewed as "this little bastard instrument over in the corner" will diminish, so that he will feel free to lead without annihilating. On all cuts save the experimental title tune and the solid opener, "Midtown", the other musicians often sound out of their element, with one notable exception: Eubanks' brother Kevin, whose guitar pops out with such grace and assurance on "Overjoyed" and "The Night Before" that the others' gropings are amplified by contrast.

ROBIN EUBANKS' personality mirrors his quixotic musical profile. He is a slender young man with piercing eyes

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## ROBIN EUBANKS

who appears to be the most glowing, happy individual when he smiles, or the most sullen, unapproachable character when he does not. At those times, though his face betrays no emotion, one senses a volcano within. Eubanks was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in 1955, the eldest of four boys in a musically ambitious family. His mother, Vera, is a fine gospel pianist whose brother Ray found his niche in the jazz idiom early on and was often accompanied by his sibling, the late Tom Bryant, on bass. Robin picked up the trombone in elementary school and never quit.

His move to New York in 1980 was due in large part to the relentless generosity of Slide Hampton, who took Eubanks under his wing after the two were introduced in Philadelphia by Eubanks' neighbour, Al Grey. Like many young musicians, Robin Eubanks got his start playing in small rock bands, while listening to groups like Chicago, Led Zeppelin, Grand Funk Railroad, and Frank Zappa. James Brown, Sly and the Family Stone, Aretha Franklin, and the host of stellar artists who gilded the Motown label were also favourites.

Meanwhile, Papa Jo Jones, along with Grey and uncles Ray and Tom, were regular visitors to the Eubanks home. This polyphonic milieu gave rise to Robin Eubanks' somewhat split musical personality. "If I just deal with the last ten years or so, which is what I've been dealing with jazz, I'm negating a whole 20 years of stuff that I listened to and that's still in me," Eubanks notes. Enter M-Base (Macro Basic Array of Structured Extemporisation), a musical grab bag conceived and purveyed by "a group of musicians who happen to live in Brooklyn and are all friends of one another", viz Coleman, Eubanks, Greg Osby, Geri Allen, Terri Lyne Carrington, Marvin "Smitty" Smith, and others.

"We saw that the music, especially young jazz musicians, were getting more and more traditional and conservative, which is really going against the grain of what we all grew up doing and listening to," Eubanks says. His album's title cut "fits within some of the concepts of M-Base that I'm interested in. It's such a wide range of things that people really zero in on their own subjective area." It defies verbal description.

But tradition still looms large in Eubanks' repertory. "I have so much respect for the traditions of music, having played with people like Philly Joe Jones; he was one of my favourites. I have a concern about the new young musicians coming up who may be more electronically-oriented, and just having the whole tradition being obliterated. Guys like Art or Dizzy, they're not gonna be around for ever, and somebody has to carry on."

Does he ever get rapped for musical duplicity?

"Well, the guys who are really into the tradition, like even the cats in Art's band, they criticise me about the [M-Base] stuff I do, and some of the people in the M-Base thing criticise me for the stuff I do with Art, but I couldn't care less . . . I get bored playing funk, I get bored just playing straight ahead, I get bored just playing odd meter stuff. I need the variety to stimulate me." Any repetitive, standard format bothers Eubanks, whether he's playing or not: "I used to get tired of turning to the jazz station and always hearing *tink ta tink* [the piano] and then hearing some

saxophone player . . . occasionally they'd have a trumpet, but I got tired of hearing saxophones, it was just a drag." Which explains, in part, his approach to his album.

EUBANKS HAS been creating his own thrills in a deeper vein: for the past five or six years, he's been exploring what he calls "a new language on the trombone, harmonically and rhythmically. It was always the real straight-ahead diatonic stuff that JJ and Slide and Curtis and Al Grey did, or the real way-off stuff like Roswell Rudd, Craig Harris and Ray Anderson, and there was a big middle ground that was left uncharted, this big no-man's-land of the trombone that nobody would really deal with. I transcribed one of Wayne Shorter's solos and it really showed me the kind of harmonic stuff that I was hearing in Wayne's playing, the stuff that the saxes and trumpets and piano had been doing for a while, and this was never done on trombone. It's something I'm trying to work on; the problem was that I couldn't listen to any trombone players who did it, because I didn't hear anybody doing it. And I've been getting a lot of support from other trombone players who call me up, or ones I meet in Europe or around the States at some gig. They recognise it's a different kind of approach, and that's really encouraging. I think I might be on the right track."

On the agenda for Robin Eubanks: an M-Base forum at the Brooklyn Academy of Music; a gig with McCoy Tyner's big band; an excursion to Switzerland with Buster Williams, juggled with Blakey's always-crammed schedule. (Japanese) Polydor is talking about another solo album; Eubanks and his buddy Steve Turre are mulling over the idea of a two-trombone album. Almost inevitably, Eubanks is "planning on putting a band together . . . it's still in the thought process as far as the personnel go; I need people who are versatile enough to play straight-ahead jazz, odd meter stuff, electric stuff, all the things I want to do."

Eubanks' perspicacious attitude prevails here; he's in no rush: "I still just need to keep working and I just have to try and get a smooth kind of transition. Art's not gonna be here for ever; I've got the rest of my life to play with my peers."

Eubanks is also aware of the financial worries that attend being a bandleader: "We gotta go through hooking up gigs. People think you just play music and that's it, but they don't realise that I have a mortgage to pay and those folks don't want to hear that I'm in between gigs, or 'oh, I'm just getting my band together . . .'"

Eubanks' steady influence is his longtime involvement with Nichiren Shoshu Buddhism, a discipline popular with musicians such as Herbie Hancock, Wayne Shorter, Williams, Carrington, and others. "You're really encouraged to find out what life is about, the uniqueness of it, and when you're able to put that in musical terms, there's no way you can sound like anybody else. People who've heard me outside the straight-ahead situation, especially trombone players, are hearing the individuality that I'm trying to get to. I'm starting to hear it too," says Robin Eubanks, with just a trace of excitement.

*Miles on Broadway.*

\*

*Next Wave in Brooklyn.*

*New Music America in Miami.*

\*

**Howard Mandel** cruises the beat.

SATURDAY NIGHT at the Vanguard: David Murray stretches melody and the tenor sax's range against rhythm-a-ning by which bassist Ray Drummond balances pianist John Hicks and drummer Ed Blackwell. A&M's risky-music producer John Snyder leans over. "Been to hear Miles? Get there — if you know someone who'll let you in . . ."

So on a buzz with a pal Sunday, phoned Indigo Blues for showtimes. I'd figured the vague ad — "jazz returns to Broadway" (close: 46th between 7th and 8th) — for hype. Busy/no answer. 'Round midnight took a chance and a cab.

Long line of ticket holders. I try the card trick on a muscled rope-holder and, surprise, he lets us through. Slide past the \$25 cover — how could I cruise this beat but for free? — and into a banquette with good view of a thick pillar. Nervous ease in the few hundred seats at tables semi-circling an ample stage. Gossipy chat at the bars. A wait, then Miles. Waist-length red leather jacket, blue trumpet, electric band.

Let no one convince you he's been coasting. He profiles and pouts, yes — and jazz-schlock pales, New Age eclecticism quakes before the savage percussion and hard back-beat traps, skip'n'-bump bass lines, Foley's plucked acid blues, shuttle blastoff key clusters Davis directs. On trumpet he sneers and slashes, moans and coos, defines what's bad about simplicity. He construes the neon hustle and stalks its edges, with a mission: to strip social music of pleasant niceties, and restyle it to his own techno-funk taste.

Not unlike what Steve Coleman, Greg Osby, Geri Allen, Cassandra Wilson and the rest of the M-Base bunch attempted in Brooklyn Academy of Music's Next Wave fest. Ms Wilson suggested both irony and warmth; the saxists and pianist used

up-to-the-minute rhythms in compositions featuring fresh, arrogant energy and technique.

I'm not totally taken with the dry, fast language Coleman, Osby and trombonist Robin Eubanks spout, though they know what they're saying and that keeps me listening to their latest recordings, *Tripleate* (Coleman with his employer Dave Holland and Jack DeJohnette on ECM), *Mind Games* and *Different Perspectives* (both JMT). So far trumpeter Graham Haynes, guitarist David Gilmore, and increasingly emotive Geri Allen speak more clearly to me. At BAM, drummers Marvin Smitty Smith and Tani Tabbal, bassists Kevin Bruce Harris, Robert Hurst, and Holland (nice of M-Base to acknowledge him), and baritone saxist Jimmy Cozier lent deep support. Percussionist Sadik Bey intoned a short poem.

This new generation of organised, jazz-experienced players, in their after-show bows, glowed with pride. Why not? Aside from personal motifs, odd time signatures and collective endeavour — all seen before — there's little that's new. But does it matter? And who's being *more* creative?

Compared to M-Base's jauntiness, composer-keyboardist Wayne Horvitz's BAM-Next Wave nights reeked of classicism. His nonet enlarged on textural themes. Horvitz usually plays in trio with Butch Morris and Bobby Previte. Every movement seemed ordained, as though Wayne was keeping admirable reedist Marty Ehrlich, golden-toned french horn player Vincent Chancey, trombonists Art Baron and Ray Anderson, and guitarist Fred Frith on a leash with precious little slack.

Hold it, though: Wayne's just a group-leader who knows what he wants. Like the rest of his circle he's flirted with, never married, free improvisation. His writing stares down criticism



that below 14th Street style's not substance (then too, he, Robin Holcomb and their daughter Nica just left Hoboken for Seattle). Horvitz's *The President* deadpans arty rock'n'roll for couch potatoes. Elliot Sharp's noise guitar shreds the static but pulsing patterns Horvitz on electronics and Holcomb on grand piano weave. Doug Wieselman riffs the post-modern blues, and Previte drives the point home. Talk about dancing in your head . . .

Cut to Ornette Coleman's Prime Time at the Cameo combined dance and concert venue in Miami Beach during New Music America first week of December. Struggling still to hear broadly enough to grasp all this band's fluctuations. Halfway through, after the bassists' duet, amplified sound and the band's sense come together. Badal Roy's tablas beat for Coleman directly – so he smiles, and lets rip! The two guitarists find their uncertainty receding, the bassists tumble in sync, Denardo pounds the pulse differently each stroke.

New Music America festivals have always been divided affairs. Founded ten years ago by composers linked to the Kitchen Center and Lovely Music label – Glasses and Reichs and Ashleys and Enos – outside the academically approved concert world, it's reluctantly admitted populist trends that locate in rock, jazz and ethnic musics something truly new. The fest moves annually, calling on various members of the loosely organised New Music Alliance to act as producing host, and the fest's success depends in part on the organisational strength of the institution that meets its challenge.

What was relatively new this year at NMA, critic Kevin Whitehead noted, was a merging of improvisation and composition: Steve Lacy with Fredric Rzewski while Irene Abeyi sang

Soviet poetry of the 20s; Lacy with George Lewis sans computer. Marilyn Crispell, digging deeply into herself, Coltrane and Monk; the Melford–Brandis piano and flute duo, calmly accepting bird cries, jet roars, other pier-side distractions in their chamber play. Solo percussionist Gerry Hemingway and solo guitarist Bill Frisell, intrigued by self- and instrument-discovery. Pianist Don Pullen basing a dissonant new piece on "Sweet Georgia Brown". Kronos Quartet violinist John Sherba finally breaking free on Hendrix's "Purple Haze".

Good-to-great at NMA: The New World Symphony, conducted by Michael Tilson Thomas, discovering Charles Wuorinen's sense of humour in "Bamboula Beach–The Miami Bamboula", and Steve Reich's heart in "The Four Sections". Morton Feldman's work, penetrating, *otto voce*. Kronos' commissions by John Zorn ("Cat O' Nine Tails") and W. Horvitz (with drum machine, per request), performed on the luxury liner *Sovereign Of The Sea*. Shelley Hirsch pumping Horst Rickel's "Mercury's Wagon". Californian Michael Peppe's orchestration of multi-tracked hand and speech gestures. Joan Logue's "30 Second Video Spots". New Music New Radio, curated by Steve Malagodi. The beach, a car, my accommodations, Cuban food, Haitian record stores.

Bad: Miami-Dade Transit System's censorship due to suspect "safety considerations" of Gordon Monahan's taped sound bites in business district people-mover cars. Highly touted but lacklustre contributions from South America and Miami's Hispanic-Caribbean community. Edwina Lee Tyler's pseudo-African posturing. The discomfort of the Strand cafe, unable to accommodate audiences for the popular concerts booked there.

Would I go again? You *do* read lips! NMA 1989 is at BAM.

**ORNETTE COLEMAN**

\*

by Barry McRae

**JOHN COLTRANE**

\*

by Brian Priestley

**MILES DAVIS**

\*

by Barry McRae

(Apollo Jazz Masters, £4.95 each)

not incompatible musical processes stand wonderfully revealed. Davis was puzzled by Coltrane's lengthy solos; Trane explained, "I couldn't find nothing good to stop on," to which Davis retorted, "All you gotta do is take the horn out of your mouth."

You could build a book around those two statements, but for the most part, the authors' focus is restricted to their subject's career, seen largely but not entirely in terms of recordings. Writing on Coleman, McRae reveals prejudices which need clarification – is it really possible to say of any musician, let alone Ornette, that he "avoided all use of predetermined structure"? He's scathing about forms less "pure" (his word) than jazz, notably R&B, an attitude which is part and parcel of his scorn for critics and musicians whom he derides as "reactionary" and "conservative". To be sure, there have been narrow-minded responses to Coleman's music, but such quasi-political vocabulary obscures as much as it reveals.

Perhaps the problems are the result of the necessarily brief treatment these lives receive, but they also show a lack of a sense of readership. The detailed discographies, the easy sense of a familiar jazz history, the occasional use of technical terms all suggest that the well-informed reader is the target. But the *cognoscenti* will be frustrated at the lack of detailed exposition and argument – the last ten years of Ornette Coleman's career are covered in half a dozen pages. None of the books is indexed; Brian Priestley does without a bibliography, but makes frequent references to others' writings – and Trane has already attracted a generous selection of biographers.

Against these important reservations, it's necessary to say that both McRae and Priestley do communicate a detailed knowledge of and love for the music they write about. Given the restricted format, both do a good job of picking out the highlights of these often troubled lives. Perhaps it's unfair to expect more: expertise and enthusiasm go a long way, after all. If none of the three titles successfully finds a path through the minefield outlined in Guedalla's definition, they do – unlike several other recent titles in the same series (such as those on Duke Ellington, Stan Getz, Woody Herman and Gerry Mulligan) – remain well to the east of tedium.

NICK KIMBERLEY

**DIZZY GILLESPIE**

\*

by Barry McRae

**BUNK JOHNSON**

\*

by Christopher Hillman

**FATS WALLER**

\*

by Alyn Shipton

(UK: Spellmount, £10.95)

As with their three predecessors in this "Life & Times" series – on Louis, Gene Krupa and Billie Holiday – the usefulness of this latest trio of biographies depends to a large extent both on how much the reader already knows about the biographee and – a related point – on how much material is available on same.

Not that a relative paucity of primary reference material (here applicable chiefly to Johnson) need automatically result in skimpiness or predictability: Don Marquis proved this with his extraordinary, myth-exploding *In Search Of Buddy Bolden*; it's just that, without a strong central authorial thesis, a short, illustrated biography can be merely a trotting-out of well-known facts.

Barry McRae, in *Dizzy Gillespie*, neatly avoids this pitfall by the surefootedness of his musical analysis. Jazz chestnuts like who played the first bebop solo (Parker with McShann or Gillespie with Hampton?), the Bird/Diz unschooled/schooled debate, the failure of the Eckstine dream-band and the reasons behind the rehabilitation in the mid-50s of the swing-era stylists are all cogently explored, as is Gillespie's musical development, as seen in his various partnerships – with Parker, Getz, Rollins etc – and his many recordings.

*Bunk Johnson* is a far less personal view; indeed in his Preface Hillman ingenuously states: "I have done no original research" and describes his speculations on his subject's psychological make-up as "inevitably ineffectual". Nevertheless, as a digest of all the available – relatively reliable – information on a figure almost universally regarded as something of a romancer on the subject of his own life and importance, Hillman's book is work-

THE HISTORIAN Philip Guedalla wrote that biography "is a very definite region bounded on the north by history, on the south by fiction, on the east by obituary, and on the west by tedium". Difficult terrain, across which the biographer is obliged to travel carefully. But why are we so drawn to biography? One of literature's most popular genres, it seems to me to be fatally flawed. The detail needed to provide an account of a life, whether as moral (or immoral) exemplar, or as minute part of a larger pattern, eventually crowds out any narrative order, leaving either a biographical skeleton, or a mass of indigestible fact.

The Apollo series of *Jazz Masters* confronts the problem by offering brief biographical sketches – usually 60–80 pages long – of figures whose lives are both representative and unique. The jazzmen covered work across a broad stylistic range without getting too modern: Barry McRae covers Miles Davis and Ornette Coleman, Brian Priestley does John Coltrane.

Davis, Coltrane and Coleman make an interesting triumvirate. The first two were born into the black bourgeoisie in 1926; Coleman was born of working-class parents in 1930. For musicians who were more or less contemporaries, they worked in startlingly different directions. It'd be fascinating to read (but hell to write) a comparative biography which contrasted, say, musical development and class origin – Davis's bourgeois background was no protection against deep-seated racism, as McRae quickly makes clear.

Philosophical difference is crucial too. Priestley quotes a conversation between Miles and Trane, in which their utterly different, but

manlike if inevitably a little sketchy.

Alyn Shipton's *Fats Waller* relies for its appeal, in line with its writer's admirable commitment to documenting early jazz through first-person accounts, largely on personal reminiscences, and thus stands or falls by their pungency or lack of same. While there is, unavoidably, a great deal along the lines of: "He sure was one hell of a piano player, but boy, could he drink" (Fats' son, asked in school what his father did, replied: "He drinks gin"), the book is saved from banality by Shipton's enthusiasm for and perceptive analysis of its subject's music. Waller's main problem, the commercialism/artistry dichotomy which dogged his career, is sympathetically dealt with, and an analysis of his recorded output, divided into solo-piano, solo-organ and with-bands, is sensibly allocated a fifth of the book's text. All three works, though, unsurprisingly given their length (130-odd pages), never really penetrate the shells of their subjects' outer lives to the personalities within.

CHRIS PARKER

#### BODY AND SOUL

★  
by Christer Landergren  
(Fotograficentrums Förlag.)

IT'S NOT easy to come up with something new when photographing musicians. Years ago, another photographer, bored, said to me "There's only five angles you can get on a trumpet player," and in the literature of the music – and this book is no exception – we get those angles over and over. Landergren, one of Sweden's leading photographers, came to music the way that I did: he was young and enthusiastic and was welcomed by editors with no money, little prestige and poor visual sense. For a while you produce what they want, then if you're any good at your craft, you go on and turn it into something personal. It can be done by concentrating on "live" action – at his best the French Jean-Pierre Leloir is the Eamonn McCabe of jazz photography – but to date only Roy DeCarava has managed to speak of the musician's inner self when he or she still has the horn in their mouth.

Landergren's best photographs are taken backstage. Lou Donaldson, the original chit-



LOU DONALDSON by CHRISTER LANDERGREN,  
from BODY AND SOUL.

tin' circuit saxophonist, peers out with the slightly acerbic look of the world-weary. Veteran Ellingtonians sit waiting their cue, worn out by the road, though in Harry Carney's case at least, still trying to put a brave face on things for the sake of a fellow working professional. They are people I know, places I've been. But nobody knows the trouble I've seen trying to come up with something different. That Landergren managed to do so on occasion is a tribute to his love for the music as much as anything.

His pictures are interspersed with reminiscences and a philosophy that is a little on the sentimental side. He insists that he rejects any image he considers demeaning, but by concentrating on the "wrong" textures, he has unwittingly stepped into the problematic area of representation. By stepping back from his

subject, he might have revealed more of the texture of the musicians' lives and thus contributed more to our understanding of the wherefore and why of the music. Homing in on another texture instead – skin, pore and sweat – he has fallen into the trap of presenting the jazz musician, generally Black, as object. And that's particularly dodgy when the history of photography reverberates with similar stereotypes, from the earliest anthropological documents through camera club exercises on the "Negro" down to today's objectification of the reggae singer and zoot-suited jazzman.

Nevertheless, if you want "record" shots of favourite musicians and have had enough of the stage-managed approach that has been dominating both vintage and current jazz photography, this book has it all.

VAL WILMER

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**DARK**  
w/David Torn and L. Shankar

**TAMNA VODA** CMP 36  
DARK's self-titled debut from 1987 was hailed in both the American and European press as one of the most important recordings since David Byrne and Brian Eno's "My Life in the Bush of Ghosts." *Option* praised the ensemble's "challenging, complex, subtle and superlative work," *Jazziz* highly recommended a "compelling, original recording" and *Forced Exposure* didn't mince words in its evaluation, calling *Dark* (CMP 28) simply "A very great slab of plastic!"

DARK's latest release, *TAMNA VODA*, presents some of the most progressive music this side of the '90s in eight original compositions and new versions of Jimi Hendrix's "Drifting" and Joachim Kuhn's "Para." Guitarist Miroslav Tadic and founding members Mark Nauseef (dr/perc/kbds), Leonice Shinneman (dr/perc/kbds) and Marc London Sims (bass) are joined by special guests David Torn (g) and L. Shankar (violin) on a powerful recording that enriches the instrumental music tradition pioneered by such seminal artists as Frank Zappa, King Crimson & The Mahavishnu Orchestra.

Digital Recording/DDD - July/August 88.



**BRACHA**

**BRACHA** CMP 34  
Bracha, the Serbo-Croatian word for "brothers", is the name of the musical fellowship formed by percussionist John Bergamo, guitarist Miroslav Tadic and bansuri flutist David Philipson in September of 1986. The original compositions and contemporary interpretations of traditional Balkan folk songs featured on the ensemble's eponymous recording debut showcase the trio's elegant and graceful style in a distinctive form of World Music that unites the musical heritages of Eastern Europe, North and South India and the Americas. Digital Recording/DDD - May 88.

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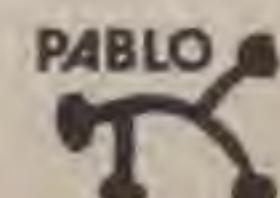
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SOUND CHECK

MARILYN CRISPELL, admired by cool cats everywhere. Photo by ANDREW POTHECARY.



**Soundcheck:**

*the sounds of March, the March of Sound  
from*

**Jackson's Texas,**

**Gonzalez's Dallasippi,**

**Crispell's labyrinth,**

**Ganelin's eternal bi-angle**

**plus**

**Sheppard, Picnic, Fingers, Smith**

*The British New Wave Sweeps On*

**plus**

**a Latin primer, a Glass menagerie, a Cage in Australia, Quebec in  
a box, a Monk in Motian and two Buds for Spring.**

**DENNIS GONZALEZ/NEW DALLAS ORLEANSSSIPPI DEBENGE-DEBENGE (Silkheart SHLP 112)**

Recorded: Dallas, 11 & 12 February 1988. *The Masses; Innocence; Debenge-Debenge*; + two additional tracks on CD. Gonzalez (t, C t, pocket t); Marlon Jordan (t); Charles Brackeen (ts); "Kidd" Jordan (sno s, as, bs clt); Malachi Favors, Henry Franklin (b); Alvin Fielder, W.A. Richardson (d).

THE LINE-UP is that of Ornette's epochal *Free Jazz*, but the musical inspiration is far closer to Trane's still-unassimilated *Ascension*. The doubled instruments are more often used here for mutual reinforcement than for creating the harmonic ambiguities underpinning those two great sets. However, Fielder and Favors in particular refuse to let the rhythms settle into any settled, unilinear progress; there's that fractured metre that is so much a part of jazz – traditional, modern, "free" – from south of the Mason-Dixon line. (There are as many points in common between this and Ornette's decades-long development of harmolodics, as with New Orleans marching music, gris-gris, rootsier strands of R&B.)

The long "The Masses" has the closest feel – and many of the drawbacks – of its models. The Buggins' turn of soloists would sound regressive were the individual contributions – to a man and boy – not so remarkable, and there is the more ambitious ensemble playing of "Innocence" and the small-group cloning of "Debenge-Debenge" to dispel any sum-of-parts aspersions.

It really is very hard (in the sense of unfair) to pick individuals from the evidently collective inspiration of "The Masses". However, Charles Brackeen is superb – as well he might be on his own charts; Favors turns in an extraordinary, percussive solo, quite the most remarkable bass playing he's done in years; young Marlon Jordan, the 17-year-old son of saxophonist "Kidd" and a Wynton discovery, plays a brash, brassy trumpet and will do with watching; Fielder proves again what a tough school AACM was.

"Innocence", by drummer Richardson, has a softer, almost airy texture, with a surprising variation of registers. Whatever else, it's testimony to Gonzalez's leadership and, presumably, arranging. It reminds me most strongly

of some of the work on that old CBS double-credit shared by Shepp's New York Contemporary Five (John Tchicai, Don Cherry) and a Ted Curson band; it's no mistake, and no discredit, that most of the analogies for Gonzalez's work should be a decade or two old; he has gone back to some of the more important lessons of the New Thing and without reinventing the wheel, taken it through new revolutions.

The basic unit breaks down into a series of trios on the live-recorded "Debenge-Debenge (Song Of The Gourd And The Spirit)", a melody based on an old Muslim hymn. Jordan *fits* and Favors again are the stand-out men here. Ironically, perhaps (though perhaps not given the live context), this is looser than "The Masses", and there is more than a hint of overkill. By and large, though, *Debenge-*



*Debenge* is a powerful and convincing statement from one of the most committed and interesting of contemporary players. Picking sidemen is an art in itself – he credits "phone vibes" – and he has managed to gather round the central geographical and stylistic triumvirate (Gonzalez–Fielder–Jordan *père*) a band of almost perfect complementarity and balance. There was always a sense in *Free Jazz* that Ornette's in-built, cross-grained orneriness had prompted a deliberate hunt for the extremes; there is an inescapable feeling, even now, that *Ascension* represented enormous force only inadequately held in check. *Debenge-Debenge* has a masterly coherence and an impressive consistency. It bids fair to become one of the more important – as well as enjoyable – albums of the year.

BRIAN MORTON

**RONALD SHANNON JACKSON TEXAS (Caravan Of Dreams CDP85012)**

Recorded: Dallas, 9–11 April 1987. *Nothing Beats Failure But A Try; Holyman; Panhandling; Charming The Beast; Evoking; Shotgun Wedding; Psychic Greeting; Wolf In Sheep's Clothing*. Eric Person (as, ss); Zane Massey (ts, ss); Cary Denigris (g); Masujaa (g); John Moody (b); Ronald Shannon Jackson (d).

**LAST EXIT IRON PATH (Virgin Venture, 2–91015)**

Recorded: NYC, 1988. *Prayer; Iron Path; The Black Bat (For Aki Ikuta); Marked For Death; The Fire Drum; Detonator; Sand Dancer; Cut And Run; Eye For An Eye; Devil's Rain*. Sonny Sharrock (g); Peter Brötzmann (ts, b-cl, bass s); Bill Laswell (b); Ronald Shannon Jackson (d).

RONALD SHANNON Jackson's first Decoding Society had some of the ponderous integrity of the Mothers Of Invention. With *Texas* the immediate comparison is the first Mahavishnu Orchestra. This is worrying to those of us who condemned John McLaughlin's aspiration to godhead via commercial success and prodigious technical blatancy. Billy Cobham's formidable drumming foreshadowed the Shannon thunder, but the Decoding Society does not suffer from McLaughlin's inability to fuse Hendrix-derived riffs with instrumental virtuosity. Here be harmolodics: the ensemble sound is paramount.

Decoding Society guitars are used for kaleidoscopic harmonic colour, the saxophones to build tension. Zane Massey's tenor and Eric Person's alto are closer to the Mike Brecker/Tom Scott mainstream than they are to Ornette, but this is not music to showcase solos. "Holyman" must be Albert Ayler – the tune remembers "Ghosts" – and achieves a tarnished splendour far weightier than the adolescent fizz of fusion. "Panhandling" breaks into the "Peter Gunn" riff, but only to let it disintegrate against the portentous sax charts. We seem to be forever in the ante-chamber of a Byzantine potentate's throne room, witnessing a conflictive pile-up of the riches of jazz and rock and funk. Turbulent and dazzling – and quite unique.

Steve Lake's pugnacious sleeve note to the *Last Exit* album seems misplaced. I cannot see Bill Laswell – who put out Billy Bang's third-stream masterpiece *Outline No 12* – agreeing wholeheartedly with this facile

condemnation of all things classical and daintiness. Last Exit deserve better than macho romanticism. True, the quartet derive energy from provoking the jazz fans who equate taste with meaning: in fact, this studio session lacks some of the coherence or seamless ferocity of their live releases. Nevertheless, it sounds marvelous: Laswell's understanding of timbre as an organising principle goes well beyond superficial orientalism, and these musicians hear each other in terms of blocks of sound – an aspect usually found only in chamber improvisation.

"Marked For Death" is their "Torture Never Stops" replete with plodding bass (Laswell dipping into his old industrial-funk bag) and evil-prince guitar (in the 70s Sonny Sharrock played like Frank Zappa and he does so again – here and on "The Black Bat"). Peter Brötzmann's impatience and vitality on sax provides a crucial rawness in contrast to the electronics – his apocalyptic bass-clarinet, half guttural death-rattle and half insane mallard, is astonishing. And Shannon is simply unbeatable.

This lush, mobile music is certainly not as harsh on the ear as Lake would have us believe – especially for anyone who likes electric guitars. Not as radical as *Weasels Ripped My Flesh*, but certainly one of the few valuable jazz-rock records made since then.

BEN WATSON

### MARILYN CRISPRESS LABYRINTHS (Victo 06)

Recorded: Victoriaville, 2 October 1987.

*Still Womb Of Light; You Don't Know What Love Is; Labyrinths; Lazy Bird; After The Rain; Au Chanteur Qui Danse (For Cecil Taylor); Encore; Over The Rainbow.*

Marilyn Crispell (p).

MAYBE IT'S becoming a truth universally acknowledged, but there's no artist nearer the living source of contemporary improvised pianism – Cecil Taylor – than Marilyn Crispell. Other pianists (Don Pullen, for instance) imitate the abundance of notes, but only Crispell has recovered the true ore of Taylor's energy and inspiration. With one important difference, the pattern of the older pianist's development is reiterated with special clarity on *Labyrinths*. There's the same partly-successful effort to renew the jazz tradition from within the Procrustean limits of the standard song form (with Taylor, "This Nearly Was Mine"; here, "You Don't Know What

Love Is"). And the more complete success in forging a new "music of residues" when those limits are transcended: a music of residual swing (but ferocious rhythmic power) and residual tonality.

The important difference is the influence of John Coltrane, so overwhelming on musicians of Marilyn Crispell's generation though she absorbed it late. (Her development is anyway an unusual one – see Graham Lock's interview in *Wire* 51). But that influence seems as much spiritual as stylistic here. The sparkling distillations of the two Coltrane numbers ("Lazy Bird" and the beautiful "After The Rain") aren't modal – just as the improvisation on the standards isn't chordal. Strangely, her method on both these sets of numbers is closer to Art Tatum's than to mainstream improvisation – she gives us a series of impressions of the

*Labyrinths* that comes from living dangerously. But it's a hard choice.

Because people don't want to be confronted with the passion and energy of this music, because they prefer their music sanitised, familiar, bland, there will never be a large audience for it. Because they don't want to be challenged, because they just want passive enjoyment, Marilyn Crispell will never make a great living. So encourage an artist; don't pass a copy of this album by.

ANDY HAMILTON

### ANDY SHEPPARD

#### INTRODUCTIONS IN THE DARK (Island AN 8742)

Recorded: London, 19–25 September 1988.

*Romantic Conversations (Between A Dancer And A Drum); Rebecca's Glass Slippers; Forbidden Fruit; Optics; Where The Spirit Takes You* (CD only).

Andy Sheppard (ts, ss, fl); Dave Buxton (p); Orphy Robinson (vib, mrm); Steve Lodder (syn); Chris Watson (g); Pete Maxfield (b); Simon Gore, Dave Adams (perc); Mamadi Kamara (perc, v, berimbau).



melody, not restructurings of it. But sometimes, I think, her treatment is too radical. I'm not sure that Andrew Hill, who for all his modernism does use the standard techniques, doesn't sometimes give a more convincing treatment of the older ballads.

But on the fiendish convoluted cross-rhythms of the title-track, or through the dancing passion of "Still Womb", the energy and artistry of Marilyn Crispell are clear. Passages of "Chanteur" could be Monk's block chording, and jostle with quotes from *The World Of Cecil Taylor*. There's an obvious contrast between these live solo performances and the more considered trio music of *Gaia*, her previous release and a structuralist manifesto. Asked to choose between the two recordings for my desert island, I'd take the earlier one; there's sometimes a hint of disorder in

ONE OF the problems young jazz musicians must sooner or later face is that of creating a context for their playing. Some are followers, while others are leaders. For the leaders the knack is trying to focus their own often precocious talents in a manner not totally in hock to all the great jazz that has preceded them. Many of the critical brickbats that have come the way of, say, Wynton Marsalis and Courtney Pine boil down to their strict observance of the gospels according to Miles Davis and John Coltrane respectively.

Andy Sheppard has partially deflected such criticism on *Introductions In The Dark* by tip-toeing away from his hard-blowing Coltrane-influenced style and heading for more pastoral climes. On this, his second album, he roves in the accessible soundscapes inhabited by the Pat Metheny Group; simple harmonic frameworks with a good melodic hook and rhapsodic interludes that swell with their own self-importance. In so doing he has arrived within shouting distance of the New Age music-masters, where he joins a surprising number of British jazz musicians who are trying their hand at similar user-friendly devices – among them Ian Carr's *Old Heartland*, Mark Wood's *La Mezcla*, and *Aspects Of Paragonne* from Stan Sulzmann and John Taylor.

For an audience tuning in to jazz, smoother melodic contours unquestionably pose fewer

listening problems; and *Introductions In The Dark* emerges as contemplative rather than exploratory with an emphasis on melodic involution rather than harmonic extensibility. Only once is there any up-front directness, on "Rebecca's Glass Slippers" which kicks from bar one with Dave Buxton's keyboard solo followed by Orphy Robinson on vibes over a "Manteca"-like vamp. When Sheppard finally surges in on Coltrane-mode, the scene is set for his best work on record so far.

The two-part "Romantic Conversations" is an exploration of texture and mood. Part One, with its suitably ethnic backdrop (including vocal *oobs* and *aahs*) is a background for a series of melodic ellipses on flute while Part Two is an exploration on tenor of a simple attractive theme that touches base with Abdullah Ibrahim's hypnotic ostinati. "Optics" gravitates towards Jan Garbarek's caverns of ice; soprano haloed in ethereal echo, the emphasis on Sheppard's day-glo tone and crafty melodic constructions.

By exploring a variety of moods and textures, Andy Sheppard slips and slides any easy pigeon-holing and almost avoids an important truth – at full throttle he is a capable and convincing improviser.

STUART NICHOLSON

#### VYACHESLAV GANELIN DUOS

*3 – 1 = 3*  
(Leo LR 410/411)

Recorded: Moscow, Vilnius, December 1980 and September 1984.

(A) *Home Music-Making*; (B) *A La Blues*.

Vyacheslav Ganelin (p, g, pipe-org, basset, synth, perc) w/(A) Vladimir Chekasin (as, vln, cl, fl, perc); (B) Vladimir Tarasov (d, tym, perc).

I ACCEPT the title's mathematics. *Interstellar Space* was a Coltrane group record, lacking nothing. *Low Life*, similarly, was a Last Exit project. And AMM is the same no matter who's in it (just compare the silences!) These Ganelin duo performances contain, codified, everything that made the trio significant. When either Tarasov or Chekasin is absent, their musical sensibility is still part of the picture. This is a natural aspect of the development of a group language and a shared vocabulary.

Ganelin, unfortunately, has been overpraised to the point where his reputation suffers from what I'll term GAS: George Antheil Syndrome. If you've had books written

about you and you've been described as "messianic" while the public-at-large still has only the scantest idea of who you are, the cry of "Hype!" is an inevitable reaction. Antheil knew the gig was up as soon as Ezra Pound's book on him hit the streets, and wisely disappeared to Hollywood to score movies, resolutely refusing to be the future of music.

Ganelin is a modest man working quietly on particular musical problems – largely to do with new shapes for jazz composition – and doesn't wish to be identified as the spearhead of anything, much less the personification of the Russian avant garde. I stress this because the sleeve notes, by "poet" Norman Weinstein, state the opposite: "These musicians . . . have unambiguously identified their music as 'Russian'." Weinstein goes on and on about "Russianness". Ganelin – I just inter-

criticise Ganelin for the humble electronic instruments he uses but, spoiled rock-generation product that I am, I can't help it. Ganelin's synths sound to me like tacky, cheap colours that militate against the serious intent of the music. Of course, his invention born out of necessity. With his range of budget keyboards, the composer is actually drafting, in his mind, a larger ensemble realisation. In the instant, this knowledge doesn't always help. But there are valuable sequences on "A La Blues" too. There's a marvellous episode for tambourine and tympani at the end of Side C. Tarasov uses the kettle drums well (it's curious that more free drummers haven't made use of the instrument, Gunter Sommer being the rare exception).

Anyway, I hope the Israeli immigration offices now responsible for Mr Ganelin's welfare buy him a Korg Polysix and a Prophet 2000 and a DX7. And maybe a big fat old Hammond B3 as well. In the interim, the reader is encouraged to buy  $3 - 1 = 3$ . With only 500 copies pressed, the record is an instant collector's item.

STEVE LAKE

#### PAUL MOTIAN MONK IN MOTIAN (JMT 834 421-1)

Recorded: New York, March 1988.

*Crepuscule With Nellie; Justice (Evidence); Ruby My Dear; Straight No Chaser; Bye-Ya; Ugly Beauty; Trinkle Tinkle; Epistrophy; Off Minor; Reflections.*  
Paul Motian (d); Joe Lovano (ts); Bill Frisell (g); Dewey Redman (ts); Geri Allen (p).



viewed him – cheerfully grants critics the right to fantasise freely, but says he's never cared a hoot for a musician's nationality and that, as far as he's concerned, the beauty of art is that it transcends locality. ("I always felt that musicians were a nation unto themselves.") Just wanted to clear that up.

Back to the record. It's culled from two live concerts frequently more introverted in character than much of the trio's discography. "Home Music Making" is the better of the two pieces and works its shifts of mood subtly. The beginning's beautiful, Ganelin on bowed guitar and Chekasin playing delicate violin. Chekasin keeps his exhibitionistic tendencies on a short leash throughout, permitting little eruptions to take place but honouring the developmental flow of the whole piece.

"A La Blues" is lumpier. It's unfair to

PRESUMABLY PAUL Motian was the instigator of this project and did most of the arrangements: in terms of performance, his is certainly not the dominant voice. For the most part the drumming on this record is articulate but low-key – patterning away, a mite impatiently, behind Frisell's lovely solo version of "Reflections", or joining at the very end of "Ugly Beauty" (until then a tenor/guitar duet) as if determined to undermine its very placidity: like adding a question mark.

Apart from the rare occasions when he actually provides a beat, Motian is the most subversive presence on these readings. Lovano (who plays tenor on all but two of the tracks) and Frisell combine on their unison statements to produce a rich, seamless texture which makes the most hummable of the tunes ("Off Minor" and "Ruby My Dear") seem stronger

than ever. It's then down to Motian's drums – and, on "Ruby", Geri Allen's piano – to spice things up, to disorientate and disconnect. It's a fruitful approach to the music, because in this context, performance also becomes a kind of analysis. Disparate elements within each composition are separated and laid bare, and the competing factions – (melodic) approachability and (rhythmic/harmonic) spikiness – instead of joining forces as they might have done in Monk's own versions, suddenly declare all-out war on each other.

Tensions abound, then, and there's no shortage of things to listen to, but there are still only a few moments when the album really takes off. One of these is "Straight No Chaser", where they jettison the chords altogether, mount a cursory percussive assault on the theme and then make way for Frisell's blistering solo, his finest in the whole set. Sidemen should be wary of him these days because he has a way of making everyone around him sound routine. (Dewey Redman is the loser on this track.)

For edge-of-the-seat excitement the only passage to top it is Frisell's duet with Motian in the middle of "Trinkle Tinkle". This is superb semi-free playing: fast, frantic and just about under control. It leaves you wishing that it had happened more often – that there were more instances where the Monk tunes were used simply as a short cut to this kind of heat and originality. If anything, Motian has stayed too close to his sources: Monk purists may well cavil at this record, but others might have liked him to take even more of those exhilarating liberties.

JONATHAN COE

### ROADSIDE PICNIC ROADSIDE PICNIC (Novus PL74002)

Recorded: No location given, 1988.

*Morning Song; Cairo; Kindred Spirit; Never Too Late; You Get Wet Sleeping In The Park; In The Maze; A New Canterbury Tale; Heart.*  
Dave O'Higgins (ts, ss); John G. Smith (ky); Mario Castronari (b); Mike Bradley (d).

FUSION, WHATEVER that means now, is a desperately difficult game. One slip and you're down the pejorative ladder to the orifices of pop-jazz and instrumental rock.

Really to connect, fusion first needs to self-de(con)struct. It must be rebuilt with different texts and meanings, with new melo-

dic and rhythmic clout. Roadside Picnic's impressive debut is almost there. Six of the eight compositions are down to Mario Castronari and his work contains a thoughtful maturity.

Tracks like "Cairo" and "A New Canterbury Tale" have a genuinely filmic quality – the former has touches of Sakamoto's *Merry Christmas Mr Lawrence* and a soprano and percussion interlude that moves like the city's shifting gears. Castronari enjoys jabbing unlikely rhythms into the music: "Morning Song", the short pop opener, is a puzzle of off-beat snatches while "Never Too Late" is also rhythmically led.

Dave O'Higgins' contributions are a positive force – on tenor his solos have a bluesy, scorching, Brecker-like edge. And his own composition, "In The Maze", shows a quick-



learnt composure – his soprano work unfolding in a deliberate and unhurried manner, much like the long lines and wide, jumping intervals of the melody. Drummer Mike Bradley is similarly resourceful on this cut; he creates a rich, buoyant under-texture.

And John G. Smith's keyboard work is mostly well chosen, particularly on "You Get Wet . . ." where it convinces because it's restrained. Yet sometimes his settings feel profoundly 70s in a Genesis/Jeff Lorber sort of way and his self-penned "Kindred Spirits" is the ladder down to soft rock and the proverbial TV theme tune.

Vigorous contemporary British "fusion" in the mould of Pinski Zoo it may not be, but Roadside Picnic's debut is robust enough to indicate they too will deliver.

PHILIP WATSON

### JOHN CAGE ETUDES AUSTRALES (Wergo WER 60152/55)

Recorded: New York, August 1978 and November/December 1982.  
Grete Sultan (p).

### KARLHEINZ STOCKHAUSEN KLAVIERSTUCKE VOLS 1 AND 2 (Schwann VMS 1067 and 1068)

Recorded: Villa Berg, SDR, 16–17 December 1985 and 19–21 February 1986.  
Vol 1: *Klavierstücke I–IV, IX–X*; Vol 2: *Klavierstücke V–VIII*.  
Bernhard Wambach (p).

### GYORGY LIGETI MUSICA RICERCATA (Wergo WER 60131)

Recorded: Munich, August 1985.  
*Musica Ricercata; Capriccio No 1; Invention; Capriccio No 2; 3 Pieces For Two Pianos*.  
Begona Uriarte (p); Karl-Hermann Mrongovius (p).

JOHN CAGE's announcement – "New music: new listening" – accords with Stockhausen's awareness that music has entered a "new epoch". This new beginning for both composers dates from the early 50s; while in 1956 Gyorgy Ligeti, forced into exile in the West after the failure of the Hungarian uprising, also experienced a watershed in his compositional life. The works on these recordings represent, in their different ways, this new era, while some of the Ligeti pieces, those by the Budapest Ligeti, serve to remind us of earlier certainties.

Though it was Stockhausen who developed the serialism of Schoenberg and Webern, ironically it was Cage who actually had lessons with Schoenberg, back in the 30s when they were both in California. The teacher's report was clear: "He's not a composer, he's an inventor – of genius." What Cage's new era represents, above all, is a challenge to the traditional craft of composition, and to the hierarchy of composer, interpreter and listener that flows from it. Indeterminacy is one part of that challenge and Cage has taken it further than anyone – Stockhausen included. A more Oriental, anti-individualist ethos is one result.

The *Etudes Australes* of 1974, given the first complete recording here by their dedicatee, Grete Sultan, represent the austerity of the mature Cage. Readers will be more familiar with the inventor's earlier construction, the beautiful *Sonatas And Interludes For Prepared Piano* (1946–8); but the clear rhythmic orga-

nisation of those pieces places them before the new era of free-form, graphic scores and chance operations. Don't expect their gamelan brightness in the *Etudes*; for one thing, it's conventional not prepared piano. Instead, prepare for the "celestial boredom" indicated by the composer: "In Zen, they say: If something is boring after two minutes, try it for four. If still boring, try it for eight, 16, 32, and so on. Eventually one discovers that it's not boring at all but very interesting."

Or just epically boring. The 32 studies last a total of 169 minutes and there is some development, if you can stand the pace; they get gradually denser in texture. But basically there's an amazing sameness about the pieces that's down to the abdication of intention, the levels of indeterminacy. In a neat astrological twist, Cage let the star-maps of the *Atlas Australis* fix the position of the notes on a grid – transferring them to manuscript paper with the aid of his favourite chance manual, the *I Ching*. Time and dynamics are largely up to the pianist. So the composer doesn't determine the "score", the score doesn't determine what the performer plays – and what the performer plays doesn't determine what the listener makes of it, either. (Cage has insisted that the listener "creates" a musical experience.) In this "formless", unassertive music there's a demand for audience projection. Like a set of Rorschach ink-patterns, the pieces are what, if anything, you make of them.

Bernhard Wambach has been involved in the Herculean task of recording Stockhausen's complete *Piano Pieces*. The ones here, nos I–X, are from near the beginning of the "new era" – 1952–55 – though the last two were revised up to 1961. Full-blown Cageian indeterminacy doesn't appear till *Piece XI*; but on the earlier numbers the performer has freedom in ornamentation.

Of course, these "studies in time" are avant-garde classics now (contradiction noted). But when the first piece appeared back in 1952, it provoked a storm of protest. For one thing, it was agreed that Stockhausen's rhythms in it were impossible to realise. And you only need to glance at the score to see what the fuss was about. Almost every bar has a change of time-signature and fractional subdivisions of the metre in crazy ratios like 11:12. The tempo marking on all the pieces in the first group of four – "As fast as possible" – does little to help the performer's paranoia. Bowing

to pressure, Stockhausen made less extreme demands in the next group (pieces V–VIII), which anyway pose a different set of problems. He wrote that they show a "new sense of time in music". This meant more flexible timing – no bar-lines and more freedom for the performer. Stockhausen related this change to his work on electronic music. It led to the amazing flux of *Piece X* and the indeterminacy of *Piece XI*.

The earlier *Klavierstücke* mark the evolution from "point" or *pointilliste* composition to "group" composition – but the new listener won't gain much from trying to grasp that pretty arcane distinction. Instead he or she should turn first to the approachable *Piece IX*. The intermittent ostinato of its famous repeating chord gives a menacing and mysterious point of reference. But it gradually comes apart



as if right and left hands are two tape tracks gradually moving out of sync, and a more relaxed mood prevails. Sustained chords create overtones while a delicate filigree darts above them. *Piece VII* had taken the "overtone technique" a stage further though; notes were silently depressed and held for long periods to create "resonating drones". Stockhausen learned this technique from Cage, who continues to exploit it in the *Etudes Australes*; interestingly, Ligeti also uses it in the *3 Pieces*, where it allows the mobile hand to play his irregular rhythms more easily.

If Stockhausen's episodic and often seemingly fragmented pieces come across as individual and ultimately compelling, Ligeti's distinctive piano compositions make a more tangible impact. The Wergo recording is an essential collection of old and new; *Musica Ricercata* and

other pieces from before his exile, *3 Pieces For Piano* from 1976. Bridging the worlds of Bartók and the American minimalists, the Hungarian composer has a more equivocal place in the new musical era than Stockhausen or Cage – more like tradition in transition.

ANDY HAMILTON

### PHILIP GLASS

#### DANCE NOS 1–5

#### (CBS F2M 44765)

Recorded: New York, 1984 (*Dance No 5*); 1985 (*Dances Nos 2 & 4*); 1986 (*Dances Nos 1 & 3*).

The Philip Glass Ensemble: Philip Glass (org); Michael Riesman (ky, conductor); Iris Hiskey (v); Jon Gibson (f, ss); Jack Kripl (f, piccolo, ss); Richard Peck (f, as, ts); Dora Ohrenstein (v).

YOU COULD argue that Philip Glass has done for minimalism exactly what Andrew Lloyd Webber has done for the musical: that is, a systematic lowering of standards coupled with the making of a considerable personal fortune. I suppose when you are seeing one of his operas there is at least the grandeur of the staging and the sheer size of the event to con you into thinking that you are witnessing something of importance. And, of course, the words are a welcome distraction. But a chamber piece such as this, heard on record, reveals Glass's musical vocabulary in all its embarrassing poverty.

*Dance* is an instrumental work in five parts, written for the choreographer Lucinda Childs. Three of the dances are for chamber ensemble (keyboards, voice and three wind instruments); these consist of rippling arpeggios of numbing harmonic simplicity, spiced up with the occasional chord change. The fact that it is played very fast and contains lots of notes gives the music a veneer of busy interest which lasts for maybe 20 seconds (each dance being around 20 minutes long). The kind of polytonality and contrapuntal richness which gives Steve Reich's music its lasting fascination is, needless to say, completely absent.

The other two dances are for solo organ: one played by Glass himself, and one played by Michael Riesman – this latter sounding like some Dixons' home keyboard gone berserk, as if someone had keyed in a beginner's auto bass line and then could think of nothing to do but add still more banal arpeggios over the top.

According to the sleeve notes this is music of an "unforgettable exuberance", which speaks of "joyful innocence . . . tenderness, regret and, finally, acceptance". Not to mention, would

you believe, "intense erotic desire". The comparison with sex is particularly unfortunate, though, because it merely draws attention to the fact that what we have here is 90 minutes of wasted effort leading to a feeble climax.

JONATHAN COE

### IKE QUEBEC

#### THE COMPLETE BLUE NOTE 45 SESSIONS (Mosaic MR3-121)

Recorded: New Jersey, 1 July 1959.

*A Light Reprieve; Blizzard Lope; Blue Monday; Zonky; Later For The Rock; Sweet And Lovely; Dear John; Blue Friday.*

Ike Quebec (ts); Skeeter Best (g); Edwin Swanston (org); Charles Sonny Wellesley (b); Les Jenkins (d).

Recorded: New Jersey, 25 September 1960.

*Everything Happens To Me; Marsh Gras; What A Difference A Day Makes; For All We Know; III Wind; If I Could Be With You, I've Got The World On A String; Me 'N Mine; Everything Happens To Me.*

Ike Quebec (ts); Sir Charles Thompson (org); Milt Hinton (b); J.C. Heard (d).

Recorded: New Jersey, 5 & 13 February 1962.

*How Long Has This Been Going On; With A Song In My Heart; Imagination; What Is There To Say?; There Is No Greater Love; All Of Me; Intermezzo; But Not For Me; All The Way.*

Ike Quebec (ts); Willie Jones (g); Earl Vandyke (org); Wilbert Hogan (d).

THIS TRIPLE-album box comprises three separate Blue Note sessions, each conveniently allocated to a single disc. The music was to provide microgroove singles for Harlem jukeboxes: hence the "45" in the title. Unlike the LP sessions Ike Quebec cut at this time, this meant the presence of a Hammond organ, the pre-eminent instrument of early-60s black populism. Here, though, jazz is still viable roots music. On none of these tracks does the organ swamp the sound in the manner of Jimmy McGriff's 1962 hit "I've Got A Woman". Attention is still focused on the tenor sax, just as it was on Coleman Hawkins' million-selling "Body And Soul" of 1939.

Aged 41 at the first of these sessions in 1959, Quebec was reviving a distinguished career. His 1940s work included spells with Coleman Hawkins and Cab Calloway, and some classic sessions for Blue Note between 1945 and 1946. The 1950s were "poorly documented" (heroin is frequently blamed, but no swing musician had an easy time during the rock 'n' roll years). Responsible for bringing

Blue Note in touch with the new developments of the 40s (previously the label had concentrated on dixieland and boogie woogie), in 1959 Quebec signed Dexter Gordon to the label and also made these recordings – previously only available on 45s (ie unavailable to most of us).

Ike Quebec's tenor playing has been unjustly neglected. He plays a languid, relaxed version of Coleman Hawkins with little of Lester Young's bebop-prefiguring sophistication. His tone sometimes resembles Dexter's, but there is none of bebop's impatience with cliché. Why listen then? What makes his timeless licks gripping is a majestic confidence and unerring sense of pace: an astonishing simplicity. Present-day neo-classicists cannot escape a tinge of kitsch when playing a ballad: here the majority of the tunes are ballads and

glowingly right on bass and Heard knows how to moderate his swing (Quebec's sudden plunges into Websterish intimacy leave the other two drummers hard put not to sound crude).

A shame that this edition is limited (a mere 7,500). The booklet (photos from Francis Wolff, notes by Michael Cuscuna) is great. To my post-CD ears there is excess surface noise on the inner grooves, but so what? "Pretty good," said Coleman Hawkins, hearing "If I Could Be With You" on the Copper Rail's jukebox. Poised between classic swing, juke-joint groove and small-group modernism, this music is essential.

BEN WATSON

### RAY ANDERSON

#### BLUES BRED IN THE BONE (Enja 5081)

Recorded: New York, 27 and 28 March, 1988.

*Blues Bred In The Bone; 53rd And Greenwood; Mona Lisa; Datune; A Flower Is A Lovesome Thing; Headlines; I Don't Want To Set The World On Fire.*

Anderson (tb); John Scofield (g); Anthony Davis (p); Mark Dresser (b); Johnny Vidacovich (d).

BLUES STRAIGHT up 'n' down, modal, minor, mixed with ballad structures, blown furioso rock 'n' roll . . . These are what's *Bred In The Bone*, will out in the flesh. Two contemporary masters, Anderson (who's from Chicago) and Scofield, deconstruct the tradition and build it anew in beguiling and satisfying ways. For instance, "53rd And Greenwood" (like the other blues, a Ray Anderson composition) sets a touching *rubato* melody against a raunchy minor blues, trombone and guitar questioning and answering in counterpoint, with an eerie coda.

That's not to say Ray's penchant for older *chansons* doesn't show itself again (we even had some Edith Piaf on his previous *It Just So Happens*). There's a catchy "Mona Lisa" done Latin, a haunting Strayhorn "Flower". "I Don't Want To Set The World On Fire" is given a slow and tender caress. Sco takes a back seat on these numbers, or drops out. Not his scene, maybe.

Now and again you meet someone who asks whether the trombone merits a solo place in jazz. OK in a brass section but really, that preposterous flatulent tone, not that removed from a tuba. Ray Anderson's playing shows the error in taste is the critic's, not his. The style is



Quebec excels. He stretches the sound to the brink of tears, but shapes it with clarity and logic.

You can hear Van Gelder's recording improve over these three dates: by 1962 the stereo has achieved wonderful depth. The first includes the most up-tempo tracks, but even here the effect is sparse and cooled-out. Edwin Swanston's organ is not notched up to screaming point and Skeeter Best is mellow, a jazzed-down version of rockin' 50s R&B guitar. On "Zonky" it is great to hear the musicians improvise themselves into a dance-beat (a service Bill Laswell's Material provides today).

The 1960 session has the best rhythm section. Milt Hinton and J.C. Heard were old colleagues from the Cab Calloway Orchestra and played on Quebec's 40s dates. Hinton is

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contemporary without the florid and flurried excesses of Craig Harris.

It's certainly a fascinating partnership with Scofield, whose post-Milesian harmonics coruscate and splinter through the blues numbers. Anthony Davis is where he does best, on the piano bench (which is not to say he isn't a composer too); Mark Dresser, Braxton's bass player, shows his versatility within the tradition too. Another indispensable album from the Chicago blues tromboneman.

ANDY HAMILTON

### GERRY HEMINGWAY

TUBWORKS

(sound aspects SAS022)

Recorded: New York City and Connecticut, 1983/7. *Four Studies For Single Instruments; Trance Tracks; Tub Etudes; Like So Many Sails; Dance Of The Sphygmoids*. Gerry Hemingway (perc).

THE WHOLE "little instruments" ethos of the 1970s in improvised music was a disaster of technical and aesthetic inattention. When the proliferation of means had only permissive value, "percussion" became *n. abs.*

The first and abiding impression of these solo pieces by Gerry Hemingway is precisely their quality of attention. Every timbral and acoustic property is fully and intelligently explored. "Dance Of The Sphygmoids" does involve a certain Cagean "preparation" but neither this, nor the battery of striking, rubbing and bowing techniques elsewhere, gives any impression of being merely gestural.

That was the chief vice even of such luminaries as Marion Brown and such important groups – with the same "democratic" aesthetic ideology – as the Art Ensemble and the Creative Construction Company; step forward, alas, Anthony Braxton, in whose latter-day quartet Hemingway regularly plays.

The solo setting of *Tubworks* means that the tachiste effects which are perfectly adequate behind blares of horn or string simply won't do service as both colour and structure. Though none of the "Four Studies For Single Instruments" betrays even the most distant inkling of orthodox sonata-form, there is also no question but that each instrumental dialect or idiolect – "own voice" – is fully developed and syntaxed. There is no evidence of mere self-satisfaction in what is notoriously anarchic musical territory.

Each of the four instruments – snare, hi-hat, bass, cymbal – develops a series of statements

and reiterations which are almost rapt. There is a thoroughly convincing coherence to each piece, despite the range of sound-effects brought into play. Rhythmic issues are not of first importance, as they are in "Trance Tracks", which follows an algebraic logic reminiscent of Steve Reich. (It's fair to suggest that, in these pieces at least, Hemingway's kinship is with the composers rather than the improvisers.)

"Like So Many Sails" is another trap piece varied with wood and metal percussion; the surface is pointillist, busy, sometimes too much so for subtlety. Hemingway combines his formal and improvisational abilities most effectively in the sophisticated "Tub Etudes", which have a curiously traditionalist feel beneath the post-modern manner. Nothing else on the set quite matches the sophisticated

style flagship for bohemians, boozers, hedonists and hangers-on everywhere. The reason I mention this again now is the release of a new LP by Tony Williams, one of the founding fathers of fusion and, consequently, one of the figures in line for instant canonisation once this revival begins to break sweat.

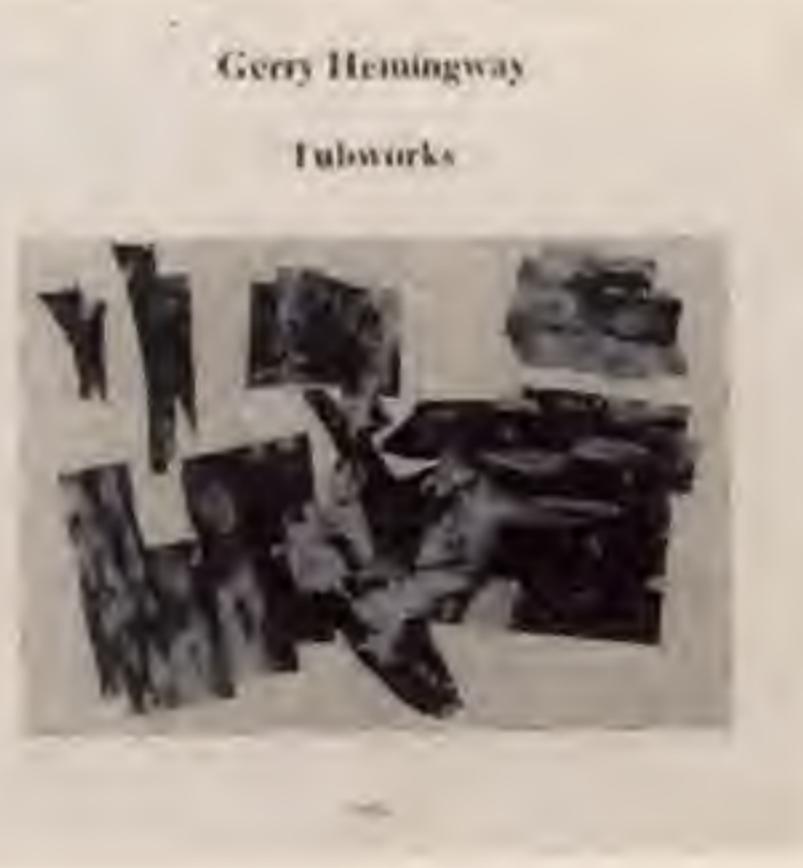
Unfortunately, though it has to be said not altogether surprisingly, *Angel Street* isn't up with the ever-changing dictates of late 80s jazz, being another aggressive and impeccably-tailored (albeit in last season's colours) collection of post-ESP hard bop. Like most records around at the moment of a similar ilk, it's pleasant enough without sounding essential.

That isn't to say the drummer has completely abandoned his fusion past. In varying degrees both "Red Mask" and "Dreamland" hit the same kind of deep groove that made his Lifetime recordings of the mid-70s some of the more durable and least excessive products of that period. As with the remaining tracks no one puts a foot wrong, everything is honed to the point of perfection and all the parts slot into place with predictable precision, just as you'd expect from such a high calibre assemblage of players as this.

Trouble is calibre ingredients don't necessarily equal quality end product, as any number of supergroups and all-star sessions have so often proved in the past. If anything it's *too* perfect; that terrible combination of technical refinement and artistic complacency that crept in via the more commercial end of the music during the mid-70s and which now afflicts 99% of all mainstream US jazz productions.

I'm not advocating the adoption of some post-punk trash amateur aesthetic here; but a few cracks in the veneer, a little dirt underfoot, wouldn't go amiss every now and then.

TONY HERRINGTON



explorations of the "Four Studies". Like his namesake, Hemingway leaves nine tenths of his musical bulk below the waterline. It takes time and equivalent patience to come to terms with this remarkable music.

BRIAN MORTON

### TONY WILLIAMS

ANGEL STREET

(Blue Note B 1 48494)

Recorded: New York City, 4–6 April 1988.

*Angel Street; Touch Me; Red Mask; Kiss Me; Dreamland; Only With You; Pee Wee; Thrill Me; Obsession*. Wallace Roney (t); Billy Pierce (ts, ss); Mulgrew Miller (p); Charnett Moffet (b); Williams (d).

A COUPLE of months ago I made the confident prediction that 1989 would be the year in which the Born Again Fusion Head replaced the Born Again Jazznick as the favoured life-

### ROBIN EUBANKS

DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES

(JMT Productions 834424-1)

Recorded: New York, June 1988.

*Midtown; The Night Before; Taicbo; You Don't Know What Love Is; Overjoyed; Walkin'; Different Perspective*. Robin Eubanks (tb, ky, perc); Slide Hampton, Clifton Anderson (tb); Douglas Purviance (b-tb); Steve Coleman (as); Michael Mossman (flhn); Kevin Eubanks (g); James Weidman (ky); Rael Wesley Grant, Peter Washington (b); Jerry Gonzales (perc); Terri Lyne Carrington, Jeff "Tain" Watts (d).

ROBIN EUBANKS has emerged, in the last few years, as one of the finest trombone players of

his generation and at 32 he's built up a more serious list of credits than most of his neobopping contemporaries.

So not surprisingly, the stated intention here is for a wide brief: "I'm sure that some people will critique this recording as being devoid of concept and too varied," says Eubanks on the sleeve. Well, I don't think he has too much to worry about on that score. Sure, there are different instrumental combinations with what might be called different "feels" (funk, Latin, Afro/funk/Latin and the odd swing) but the record never strays far from digestible post-bop plus tasteful dubbing and unobtrusive electronics.

Having said that, there is some of the excellent trombone playing we've been used to hearing from Eubanks in the Dave Holland and Steve Coleman groups. "Midtown" is bottom-heavy funk, its urban-wise sound inspired by midtown Manhattan; brother Kevin is suitably flashy. "The Night Before" has an atmosphere of spacious balladry on which the trombonist is accompanied by acoustic guitar and double bass. The passion is controlled but very real all the same; the upward sweep to high places adding to the poignancy. "You Don't Know What Love Is", the other ballad on this record, is disappointing by comparison; Eubanks is unadventurous, finding the edge occasionally but not being able to build on it.

Stevie Wonder's "Overjoyed" (despite Eubanks' admiration for its composer) is given a bland treatment. Like so many of Wonder's fine songs, the melody needs something more than the soft Latin treatment it gets here if it is going to stand up on its own. And speaking of blandness, "Walkin'" (featuring all the trombonists) is the kind of arrangement that could be found in the books of just about any US high-school big band, though Eubanks himself sways with characteristic bop and rhythmic rightness.

"Taicho" and "Different Perspectives" are probably the two most enjoyable and exciting tracks here and the only two on which the leader really loosens his chops. The former composition has the burnished, Spanish tinges of Booker Little's "Victory And Sorrow", the 'bone diving and soaring in angular arcs. If that solo was good then the one on the title track is bad: Steve Coleman hops nimbly among the modes over a left-handed ostinato bass figure before a rather excitable Latin theme emerges, cueing a fierce Eubanks solo

over the rising percussion. (Jeff "Tain" Watts, throughout the record, but particularly on this track, is nothing short of brilliant.)

Plenty of enjoyable moments then, but I feel that the real inventiveness has still to come. Perhaps Robin Eubanks should recall the time he spent with the other-worldly master Sun Ra.

ROLAND RAMANAN

### Cassandra Wilson

#### BLUE SKIES

(JMT 834 419-1)

Recorded: February 1988.

*Shall We Dance; Polka Dots And Moonbeams; I've Grown Accustomed To His Face; I Didn't Know What Time It Was; I'm Old Fashioned; Sweet Lorraine; My One And Only Love; Autumn Nocturne; Blue Skies.*

Cassandra Wilson (v), with Mulgrew Miller (p); Lonnie Plaxico (b); Terry Lyne Carrington (d).



and polishing a few favourite pearls.

Wilson sings the tunes with the right detachment – you can't wallow in a song such as "Polka Dots" without being camp these days – and evokes an intimacy which is thoughtful rather than sentimental. I've never heard a jazz treatment of "Shall We Dance" before, and this one starts the record like a manifesto. Wilson sidles through the lyric like someone out on the floor, caught in the pulse of the rhythm but unsure as to whether to give herself up – a perfect illustration of the lyric.

The timbre of her voice is like that of a young Nina Simone, a contralto not yet settled into its deepest climes, but her phrasing, perhaps inevitably, is grown from the inventions of Betty Carter. Listen to her legato slurs on "I've Grown Accustomed", a page straight out of Carter's book, although she never strays as far outside as the older singer. Her scatting on "I Didn't Know" and "My One And Only Love" is reserved, a component of the group rather than an out-front instrument.

Miller, who gets on more records month by month than any other pianist, is assured, pensive, committed – his usual. Carrington is a little brusque for me but doesn't upset the mood too much. I like the ballads best: "Autumn Nocturne", a beautiful choice, is hushed and private, but the best track is Wilson's stand-offish treatment of "Sweet Lorraine". Is she the Lorraine of the lyric, or a bystander? One can't tell.

RICHARD COOK

### VARIOUS ARTISTS

#### THE FREEDOM PRINCIPLE

(Urban 8379251)

Recorded: Unknown date and location.

*Black Dahlia; Spend Some Time; The Shrimp; Slow Fuse; Snow Boys House Of Latin; Mother Of The Future; Words Within Words; Down On The River.*

Personnel includes: (Track 1) Philip Bent (f); Orphy Robinson (vib); (2) Cleveland Watkiss (v); (3) Jason Rebello (p); (4) Tom Sanders (ts, ss); Simon Clarke (as, bs); Roddy Lorimer (t, flhn); Paul Reid (p); (5) Snowboy (perc); (6) The Jazz Renegades – Alan Barnes (ts); Steve White (d); Sarah Jane Morris (v); (7) Steve Williamson (ss); (8) James Taylor (org).

Now, what do we have here then? A batch of *Wire* favourites, some award winners no less, cropping up on something labelled Acid Jazz? An album purporting to take (and I quote) "a giant step towards the nineties" – one proffering "the sound of now"?

What? Which way do we turn? This one

cannot be so easily written off as another unimaginably dire miscellany of early 70s US fusion "classics". Have these artistic souls been hijacked in the finest tabloid "El Ci-i-e-e-d" horror-story fashion?

And that title *The Freedom Principle* rings a bell, does it not? Ah yes, here in the press release is *Straight No Chaser* editor, Paul Bradshaw, explaining it is "a term we coined to describe our own wayward perspective". But wait. Holy Coincidence — I have it. Go back to '84. A book. An author: John Litweiler. The subject: jazz after 1958. Its title . . . *Weird*.

But what of the music? Well, in a decidedly patchy compilation, there flicker some real highlights. Steve Williamson's pensive, mysterious "Words Within Words" shines out as the most inspired and inventive composition on the record. Sounding very Lacyesque, it contains a wonderfully angular melodic interlude played as a darting duet between soprano and piano. On the strength of this cut, Williamson seems to have developed his style far beyond his earlier more meandering bombast. His is a talent demanding a full hearing — on vinyl outside the confines of *The Freedom Principle*.

Another young player showing a thoughtful approach is Jason Rebello. "The Shrimp" is a sharp, biting composition, one of changing moods and tensions built up by a piano solo of harmonic and rhythmic daring.

Other flashes of originality are journalist/composer David Toop's "Black Dahlia", a dark, elusive melody successfully contrasted with a more straight-ahead House rhythm; and Cleveland Watkiss' "Spend Some Time", a nod to Bobby McFerrin's recent hit but reggae-rapped a whole stage further.

Lamentable, however, is the offering from the James Taylor Quartet — the combo (and I quote again) "synonymous with the Acid Jazz phenomena" (sic). With its Hammond organ grooves and lick-laden sax solos, theirs is a retro 12-bar truly pushing back the boundaries — back about 30 years. If this is the sound of now, my name's Jimmy Smith.

Similarly dreary is the repetitive and overlong "Slow Fuse" by Slow Fuse, a track which nonetheless features the dissonant marvels of the 19-year-old pianist Paul Reid. His is a style demanding a context a little more challenging than a dance groove — the collision creates an absurd incongruity, like mixing Cecil Taylor with Jean Michel Jarre.

Still, beneath all the silly Acid Jazz hype, this LP has some music of considerable artistic integrity.

PHILIP WATSON

### JOSE CHALAS

#### LIVING ON AVENUE F (Sunjump SJR02)

Recorded: New York, July 1986–December 1987. *Living On Avenue F; Who Created God?; The Reagan Years; Breakfast Complex; Tee Tong; Octopus Of My Heart; The Hudson At Highland; Daphnis; That Latin Guy; Don't Bother; Mountaineers*.

Jose Chalas (g, sax-mouthpiece); Dave Douglas (tr, ky); Mike Leslie (b); James Mussen (d); Isidro Bobadilla (perc).

JOSE CHALAS is a guitarist from New York who leads a tight, hungry and unconventional unit. This is not commercial music, though it is



evident that the group know and love popular forms. Like John Zorn's Naked City, the music alternates cod-funk and batman-music with free improvisation (though it lacks Zorn's downtown self-consciousness).

The title track kicks off with a sarcastic version of the "Peter Gunn" riff, the icily accurate horn charts giving a sensation of funk spooled backwards. Chalas' guitar is bravely abstract, but gritty with it. The group improvisations, a third of the record's running-time, are assured scene-painting: there is none of the scratch-and-fumble negation characteristic of European free music.

Arches of development are judged with foresight and panache — the eight-minute "Don't Bother" is a *tour de force*. On "That Latin Guy" Chalas' mouthpiece exhortations provide a strikingly vocal focus. Dave Douglas (whose "The

Hudson At Highland", a frozen melody for guitar and trumpet that uses Ornette's plaintive isolation, is the only non-Chalas, non-group piece) is not really a free player, but his long, expansive trumpet lines work well. James Mussen's drums provide a vivid, sloshing beat drenched in cymbal smashes; Mike Leslie's bass is funky yet melodic (the tunes he gets on "Daphnis" are inspired).

Jose Chalas' compositions are forceful, aptly constructed for the avant-garde boogie terrain he has chosen. The popping funk of "The Reagan Years" leaps daring atonal intervals; "Octopus Of My Heart" is a carefully built sandcastle of straining chords that crumbles into waves of free improvisation; "Tee Tong" is a march for garden gnomes, dadaist and threatening. "Mountaineers" is the most conventional track: the electric bass bespeaks fusion, but Dave Douglas' trumpet has the broken wit and sudden jazz-pungency of the mid-60s Blue Note avant garde (ie he plays wonderfully).

Chalas adopts the methods of free jazz, but uses cunning arrangements to remove textural muddle and romanticised ethnicity. He has established a fruitful dialogue between punk-funk fun and freedom — and also made an enjoyable record.

BEN WATSON

(Available from Sunjump Records, PO Box 1117, Woodstock, NY 12498, USA)

### RICKY FORD

#### SAXOTIC STOMP (Muse MR 5349)

Recorded: New Jersey, 4 September 1987. *Saxotic Stomp; Major Love; Art Steps; For Mary Lou; Ben's Den; Long Shadow; Ba-Lue Bolivar Ba-Lues-Are*. Ford (ts); James Spaulding (as, fl); Charles Davis (bs); Kirk Lightsey (p); Ray Drummond (b); Jimmy Cobb (d).

RICKY FORD, now in his mid-30s, seems to be a late developer. But after a lot of frankly uninteresting work, including a predecessor of this album on Muse, *Shorter Ideas*, he's blossoming into a powerful individual voice and promising composer. Somehow, he's managed to become a modern-sounding player while totally avoiding the tone and style of John Coltrane. The sound is huge, the model Coleman Hawkins. Just how authoritative he's become could be gauged from the way he dominated the ensemble on the recent tour of Abdullah Ibrahim's Ekaya.

That's not to say that the best sax player on the album isn't (probably) James Spaulding, who contributes some compelling solos on the sextet tracks on side one. The title-track, like most of the others, is a Ford composition, a fine contrapuntal workout that sometimes suggests "Things To Come". "Art Steps" is almost "Giant Steps". But Ricky does have a penchant for shorterish ballads where his playing isn't always gripping – despite the odd passage that could have been lifted straight out of a Dexter Gordon solo. He's come a long way, still needs to go a bit further to lose his reputation for plain "solidity".

ANDY HAMILTON

**TOMMY SMITH**  
**STEP BY STEP**  
(Blue Note BLT 1001)

Recorded: New York, 7–8 September 1988.  
*Ally The Wallygator; Step By Step; Ghosts; Pillow Talk; Time Piece; Springtime; Free Time\*; Ever Never Land\**. (\*CD only.)  
Tommy Smith (ts); Mitch Forman (ky); John Scofield (g); Eddie Gomez (b); Jack DeJohnette (d).

THERE MIGHT be a lot of All-American muscle behind Tommy Smith's big league debut, but the spectre hovering at this particular feast is Norwegian in origin. Smith's interesting among the current crop of British tenormen because he's the least in debt to the major influences of Coltrane, Rollins and Shorter – at least, at first hand. He handles mood pieces better than Pine or Sheppard or whoever, because he's that kind of player. "Ally The Wallygator" starts his album on a sombre note, and the track's arrangement is expertly wrought, building to Forman's entry on piano like a slowly opening lotus.

Note by note, though, Smith's playing lacks a genuine complexity of thought, which is a problem in a piece like the following "Step By Step". While Gomez and DeJohnette fashion a rhythmic structure of great intricacy, Tommy's response is to withdraw into himself. In the crucial middle section of his solo he sounds like he's practising held high notes instead of playing anything meaningful. But this isn't the sort of record which is best examined in pieces. While Smith's earlier albums have all been casual blowing of one sort or another, this is delivered as the sculpted, ambient statement.

"Ally", "Ghosts" and "Time Pieces" are the

major pieces. The latter two especially seem like fugitives from a Jan Garbarek or, more accurately, an early Arild Andersen date for ECM – the bleakly haunting tones, resonant spaces and frosty insistence are very familiar. Smith's solo in "Ghosts" is derived entirely from Garbarek, even down to the sudden trills and shadings of volume.

It's not a bad collection of themes. Gary Burton's tutelage must have scoured Smith of any desire to write the kind of Trane-based strings of phrases which serve as original compositions for many of his contemporaries. The development of "Time Piece" and "Ally" is ruthlessly logical. Perhaps "Pillow Talk" is a mistake – it sounds like a stab at a lowdown groove, completely at odds with everything else. Especially the production. The studio sound is the nub of the whole enterprise. Gary



Burton has produced it in a very soft focus – masses of reverb, but little of the chiming clarity of an ECM date. One wonders if Alan Omokhoje's "executive production" had anything to do with this. The net result is the obscuring of the drums – DeJohnette sounds like he's in a heat haze throughout – and the image of Smith as an almost supernatural figure in the middle distance of the mix. It's all rather strange.

The saxophonist never seems awed by his company, but the point remains that he's not really on their level. After his solo on "Springtime", Scofield steps up and blows him away. Smith's hot moment is saved for the final "Ever Never Land", a stubborn tenor feature again confused by the studio sound. I guess the album is a step forward.

MIKE FISH

**RASOUL GIBRAN**  
**JUST A MOMENT**  
(Bop Cassettes BIP 301)

Recorded: Manchester, 1988.  
*Fanfare For Lyons; The Paris Connection; That Was; Growin' On Ice; Basuari; This Is; At Sevens; Mr Mesmer; Stopping The World*.  
Gibran (p, ss, f, af); Sylvan Richardson Jnr (b); Ivor R. Aizenberg (d).

A RAW but promising recording on cassette by a young band (all under 22) from a series supported by North-West Arts. The sound is a bit rough but the playing's never less than exciting and the originals (all by pianist Gibran) are catchy.

The numbers are in a modal vein – mostly variations on a "So What"/"Milestones" sort of idea, though "Paris Connection" is a pretty waltz and "At Sevens" is neat in 7/4 time. Rasoul Gibran is a very fluent player and he gets around the keyboard impressively but there's a bit too much simple rushing up and down the scales. Just because it's modal doesn't mean melody goes out the window (listen to McCoy), and it would be nice if he used in his improvisations the melodic gift shown in his compositions. More important, the band need to listen to each other more (don't we all of course).

There's a fair bit of what I guess is over-dubbed soprano and flute by the leader, though the straight trio tracks are the most effective. But there's a good band in the making here.

ANDY HAMILTON  
(Bop Cassettes are at 28 Oak Road, Withington, Manchester M20 9DA.)

**MEL TORME**  
**ROUND MIDNIGHT: A RETROSPECTIVE**  
1956–1968  
(Stash ST-CD-4)

Recorded: New York, Los Angeles, Hollywood or San Francisco, 1956–68.  
*I've Got A World That Swings; Quiet Nights; Comin' Home Baby; Sidney's Soliloquy; Dat Dere; When Sunny Gets Blue; Li'l Darlin'; Fascinating Rhythm; Four Brothers; Lonely Girl; Bluesette; That Face; Gone With The Wind; That Old Feeling; Don't Let That Moon Get Away; All I Need Is The Girl; I'll Be Seeing You; Lulu's Back In Town; When The Sun Comes Out; The Lady Is A Tramp; Hello Young Lovers; Porgy And Bess Medley; Hey, Look Me Over; Surrey With The Fringe On Top; The Lady's In Love With You; Round Midnight*.  
Torme (v, p, d) with various accompaniment including Marty Paich Dektette; Shorty Rogers &

His Giants; Count Basie Orchestra; Benny Barth Trio; Don Trenner Orchestra; Woody Herman Orchestra.

**MEL TORME AND GEORGE SHEARING  
A VINTAGE YEAR  
(Concord CJ-341)**

Recorded: Saratoga, August 1987.

*Whisper Not/Love Me Or Leave Me; Out Of This World; Someday I'll Find You; The Midnight Sun; New York, New York Medley; Since I Fell For You; The Way You Look Tonight; Anyone Can Whistle/A Tune For Humming; When Sunny Gets Blue; Little Man You've Had A Busy Day.*

Torme (v); George Shearing (p); John Leitham (b); Donny Osborne (d).

**MEL TORME AND THE MARTY PAICH DEK-TETTE  
REUNION  
(Concord CJ-360)**

Recorded: Hollywood, August 1988.

*Sweet Georgia Brown; When You Wish Upon A Star/I'm Wishing; Walk Between Raindrops; The Blues; Bossa Nova Potpourri; The Trolley Song/Get Me To The Church On Time; More Than You Know; The Goodbye Look; For Whom The Bell Tolls/Spain.*

Torme (v), with Warren Luening, Jack Sheldon (t); Lou McReary (tb); Bob Enevoldsen (vib); Gary Foster (as); Ken Peplowski (ts); Bob Efford (bs); Pete Jolly (p); Jim Self (tba); Chuck Berghofer (b); Jeff Hamilton (d); Joe Porcaro, Efrain Toro (perc).

THE LAST jazz singer? At least one of the last of the stylists who defined an era as much as any West Coast horn player or bebop pianist. It's Mel Torme's cool stance that has kept him, well, cool. He started young enough to still be youthful enough to handle these records without undue strain. Certainly his high notes on "More Than You Know" on *Reunion* or "Out Of This World" on *Vintage Year* are as smooth as honey. The Stash collection finds Torme in his prime but the wear and tear of the intervening years has hardly strained his voice. The "oo" of "The Blues" has a rounded, boyish purity, which suggests another reason for Torme's longevity: his persona has seldom had even a whiff of sex about it, so the spectacle of growing old and still trying to be a ladykiller (*à la* Sinatra) hasn't troubled him. He still sounds as if he's serenading beneath a balcony instead of being up there in the bedroom.

The album with Shearing is for fans only, perhaps. The pianist really isn't as good as the singer insists, and the showbiz gets in the way of things like the "New York New York" medley. But there's some fine and serious singing in "Out Of This World" and "The

Way You Look". *Round Midnight* is a collector's set, too, broadcast items and studio outtakes in sometimes indifferent sound, even on CD. Though Torme is unfailingly professional, he lacks some of the concentration he brings to finished studio takes, and some of the tunes are played for laughs. He sits at the drums for "Four Brothers" and piano on "Gone With The Wind", and the "Porgy And Bess" tunes suggest that "serious" Gershwin isn't his natural ground. But the ebullient "Comin' Home Baby" and some other infectious items are very agreeable.

*Reunion*, though, is his best set for a while. Back with Marty Paich, who scored Torme classics like the *Swings Shubert Alley* album, the singer is intense, amusing, passionate, hip. They start "Sweet Georgia Brown" with the same intro they used for "Lulu's Back In



Town" 30 years before, and the record cruises from that point on. The Donald Fagen tunes are a bit odd, though "Raindrops" is a lightly engaging cameo, but everything else is immaculately judged, from the scat-and-sensitivity mixture of the Bossa medley to the intense, lived-in "More Than You Know". Paich is still glib, but he makes glibness a virtue.

RICHARD COOK

**HERB ROBERTSON BRASS ENSEMBLE  
SHADES OF BUD POWELL  
(JMT LP834-420)**

Recorded: New York, January/February 1988.

*Un Poco Loco; I'll Keep Loving You; Hallucinations; Glass Enclosure; The Fruit; Shades Of Bud.*  
Herb Robertson (t, flhn); Brian Lynch (t); Robin Eubanks (tb); Vincent Chancey (frh); Bob Stewart (tba); Joey Baron (d, perc).

**MIKE MELLILLO TRIO**

**ALTERNATE CHANGES (FOR BUD)  
(Red NS211)**

Recorded: Rome, February 1987.

*Sure Thing; Hallucinations; Dusk In Sandi; Oblivion; Celia; Tempus Fugit; Bouncing With Bud; Wail; Alternate Changes; Un Poco Loco.*

Mike Mellilo (p); Massimo Moriconi (b); Giampaolo Ascolese (d).

THE IDEA of salvage seems to have developed from personal eccentricity into a profitable line of business, and now it ain't just jazz and the shipping business that's into this. In jazz it stretches back to the New Orleans Revival and the 1940s (maybe we ought to do a retrospective on the Crane River band . . . well no, maybe not) but bebop seems to be the ripest thing for redevelopment at the moment. However, this kind of work can be done in different ways, and these two albums follow very different paths.

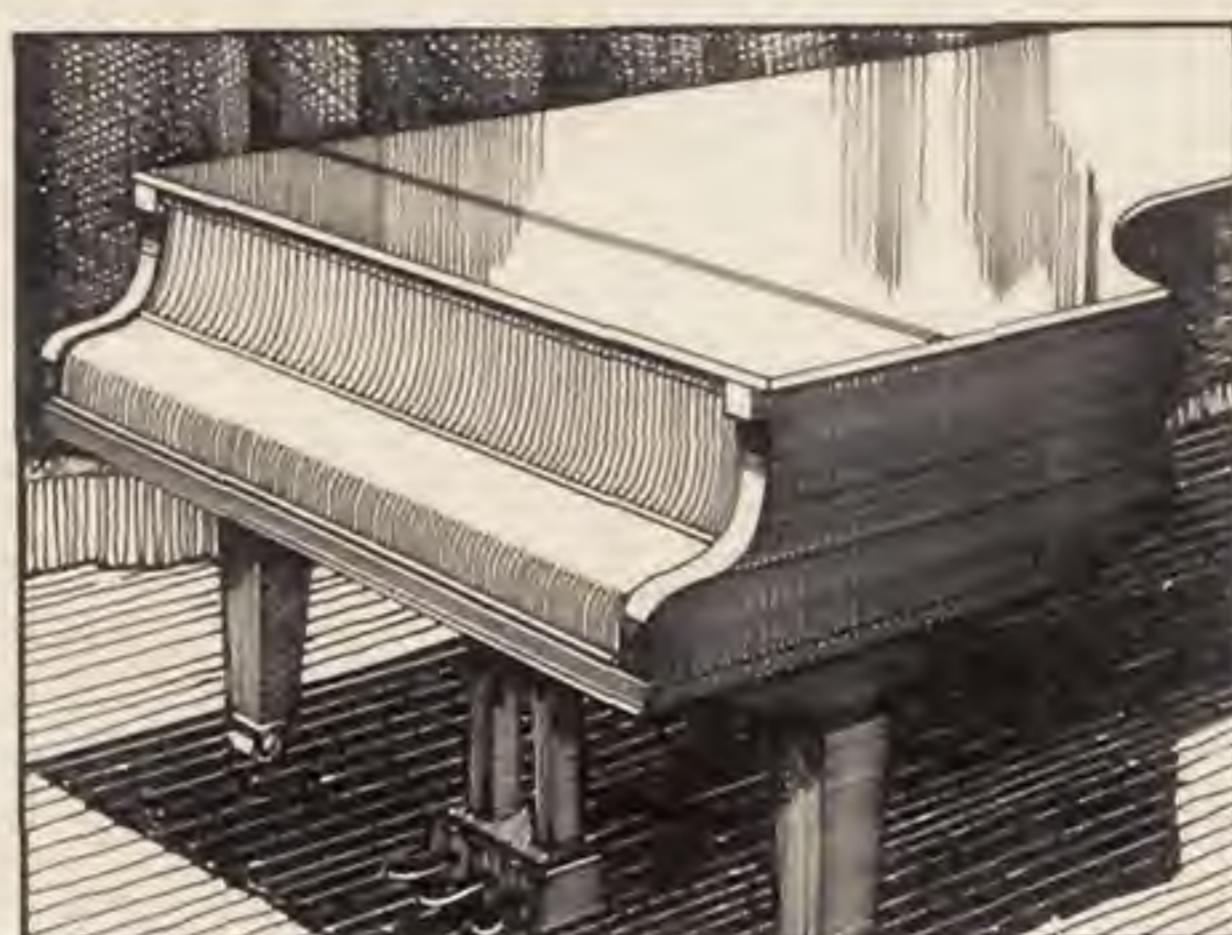
Robertson never seeks to re-create Powell's work in any dimension; in fact he rather seeks to avoid such a direct relationship. Given the disparity of a brass-based band to Powell's preferred piano-bass-drums format this may seem an easy enough trick to pull off, but Robertson gives notice that he's listened a lot and has deliberately substituted a level which reveals his allegiances yet intimates a conscious decision to do it this way.

Thus, the peremptory march-past of Powell's own phrasing on "Glass Enclosure", which has conjured up for me an easy transition to a very Aylerish hymnal statement, is here loosened into a more sinuous Carla Bley-like event which also contains its own indicator to something the Liberation Music Orchestra once did. Equally, "Hallucinations" (aka "Budo") refuses to be drawn into its previous (*Birth Of The Cool*) band version but teases you with the possibility that it might so develop.

At the other end of the scale Robertson's version of "Un Poco Loco" recognises that with a line as irresistible as this you're better off playing it straight: it's a pity the improvisation doesn't rise to it, but then "I'll Keep Loving You" transcends all this by doing those dark, dissonant, long-held voicings rather more effectively than Powell's own slow-tempo work generally managed.

Mellilo, on the other hand, attempts to present Powell's music to a fresh audience simply by sitting down at a piano and doing like Bud, accompanied by a slightly over-

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Dizzy Gillespie, a leader  
of the bebop movement, 1944



modern bassist and drummer. Yet "simply" isn't quite the word: what Mellilo seeks to convey is that Powell's music is more than just good compositions, but requires – if it is to be pursued in anything like its original form – a level of concentration, a density of thought and a fund of ideas that requires musicianship of the very highest order. A level that even Powell himself, finally, couldn't always sustain. In one sense this sort of "follow-on" procedure is easier – it's possible to learn from the study of Powell's own recordings – but it becomes not at all easy when the lesson has to be drawn that even replication demands immense technical command and the ability simultaneously to order thought.

Contemporaneously, nobody ever tried to play exactly like Powell, for the same reasons nobody ever played exactly like Parker – it was just too difficult to sustain, though the form, the ideas and the style were individually negotiable and universal enough to encourage an individual approach and response. Mellilo doesn't perfectly re-create his mentor either, though he comes closer to it than anyone else I've ever heard. Even when he varies it a bit, as in the slower-tempo reading of "Bouncing With Bud", it carries a remarkable frisson of authenticity. Sometimes it's a bit like walking into the Blue Note in Paris again, and the clock's gone back a quarter of a century.

So where Robertson seeks to erect a fresh edifice on old foundations, Mellilo tries to re-create the original structure in all its gothic complexity. Yet both albums are attempts to put Powell's music back on the contemporary agenda, and lead us to realise once again what an awe-inspiring talent the man possessed.

JACK COOKE

### ITCHY FINGERS TERANGA (Venture VE 28)

Recorded: July 1988.

*Now And Then; Building; Storm; Teranga; The Drover's Road; Woe; Transylmania; Wal's; Farewell Forest; The Devil's Pulpit; Someday My Cheque Will Come.*

John Graham (ss, as, ts, cl, penny w); Mike Mower (ts, ss, f, picc); Martin Speake (as, ts); Howard Turner (bs, bcl); Richard Cottle (ky); Laurence Cottle (b); Jeremy Stacey (d); W. Graham Senior (bodhran); Airto Moreira (perc).

ITCHY FINGERS walk tightropes. Their compositions and arrangements demonstrate great virtuosity, empathy and precision – some have

a speedy, closely-honed tension to them. Yet at times they seem too ostentatious; they flash and twist too far only to recoil in on themselves. Walk the line between clever and clever-clever.

The band shows a healthy interest in other musics. *Teranga* shifts from classical to folk to jazz-rock – the resonant production can even make them sound like an entire big-band horn section. Yet while the too short-lived "The Drover's Road" is a faithful and uplifting Irish jig, on other tracks the effects seem straight out of the (ahem) Barry Manilow school of world music. "Farewell Forest" begins with thunder-cracking skies and the cries of tropical birds; the title track has a "wild" carnival-cheering interlude. Walk the line between authenticity and mimicry.

To one writer Itchy Fingers "bring fun into



jazz" – a factor that has brought them great success abroad. On record this joyfulness occasionally connects – "Transylmania", for example has a vaguely Adams Family wackiness to it. Yet sometimes this fun is too cartoon, instilling a levity that actually undermines scores of serious complexity and polish. At its worst, as on "Someday My Cheque Will Come", with its sounds of table-tennis playing to begin and production "jokes" to end, it all seems rather *Boy's Own*. Walk the line between fun and flippancy.

And strangely, while Mike Mower is the prime mover behind Itchy Fingers, it is John Graham's compositions that seem to work best. "Transylmania" is *Teranga's* best shot, balancing a strong Moorish melody, an abrupt patchwork of moods and superb, searing soprano work. And Graham's quarter piece "The

Devil's Pulpit" shows how things work best planed down. Subtle and deceptively simple, it contains more power, more emotion than all the cascading, mono-dimensional flurries of the speedier compositions put together.

PHILIP WATSON

### THE ETHNIC HERITAGE ENSEMBLE ANCESTRAL SONG (LIVE FROM STOCKHOLM)

(Silkheart Records SHLP-108)

Recorded: Stockholm, 3 May 1987.

*Papa's Bounce; Loose Pocket; Ancestral Song; Mamma's House.*

Kahil El'Zabar (sansa, perc, v, d, earth d); Edward Wilkerson (alto-cl, ts, perc); Joseph Bowie (tbn, marimba, perc).

THIS TRIO is led by Kahil El'Zabar. Over the years, members have generally been drafted from the Chicago free scene (past saxophonists have included Maurice McIntyre and Henry Huff) and the present line-up is no exception. El'Zabar shares the Art Ensemble of Chicago's all-inclusive view of the Afro-American heritage: oriental scales and middle-eastern rhythms abound.

On the cover they pose together for all the world like the Ornette Coleman Trio on *At The Golden Circle, Stockholm*, but this is a slighter affair. "Papa's Bounce" is loosely oriental, alto clarinet gently moving up and down the marimba's chimes. The title track lays a repetitive trombone riff beneath a steady earth drum. "Mamma's House" is more of the same, with some stabbing trombone from Bowie – Zabar's conga-like ripostes are exhilarating. Bowie's breath and lips are utterly controlled, though the music never quite develops the heat to let him pitch in at his braying best. As to Wilkerson, on "Mamma's House" one gets glimpses of the raw enquiry that makes Albert Ayler so compelling, but the ethnic charm of the backdrop gives him nothing to tear apart.

On the last half of "Loose Pocket" Zabar at last applies himself to the orthodox kit and creates drive and tension missing elsewhere. It is as if industrialisation has suddenly snatched a remote, insignificant village into the course of world history: incantation gives way to statement. With lesser musicians being touted as guardians of the flame, it would be a shame if this brilliant trio were to dawdle forever up the garden path of ethnic utopianism: time for a spell in the concrete jungle, guys.

BEN WATSON

## FAST LICKS

**JIMMY MCGRIFF/HANK CRAWFORD: STEPPIN' UP** (Milestone M-9153). Recording engineer Rudy Van Gelder continues to lay down the crucial tracks. Instead of the widescreen Hammond blast of McGriff's previous Milestone album (*Wire 48*), space is made for Aretha-Atlantic-Soul veteran Hank Crawford's supple alto. There's still McGriff's patent pressure-cooker swing, but there's more room for jazz interaction. Rare-groove cult-figure Jimmy Ponder supplies ringing guitar and drummer Vance James the necessary rimshots and rolls. Billy Preston guests on piano with a surprisingly light touch, sprinkling notes over McGriff's organ chords. The quartet is touring in May, so do your homework — this one's a killer.

BEN WATSON

**QUARTET MUSIC: WINDOW ON THE LAKE** (Nine Winds 0122). Pleasant, contemplative selection of originals from Californian quartet with lead shared mainly between Jeff Gautier's violin and viola and Nels Cline's acoustic guitar, with occasional contributions from Eric von Essen's piano or bass, all held together by the considered drums and percussion of Alex Cline, who is very much a member of the breathing-cymbals-and-woodblock school. The standout track, "Window On The Lake", is an attractive tribute to Joni Mitchell which uses the lilting guitar of her *Clouds* and *Ladies Of The Canyon* period to underpin some charming improvisation, but overall the album suffers from its frequent veerings towards New Age Music; track-titles like "Circular Thoughts In Darkness" and "Zen Piece" give the uncomfortable impression that this is music to meditate to.

CHRIS PARKER

**FLETCHER HENDERSON: SWING 1929-1937** (BBC REB 682). A fine collection of tracks by Henderson's band in its most mature period. Robert Parker has ignored the more commercial entries and gone for the stomps, which makes the record more enjoyable if granting a biased picture of what the band did. Coleman Hawkins was the dominant figure with Henderson for most of this time — listen to his

brief, stunning solo in the 1931 "Sugar Foot Stomp" — and it would have been appropriate to have included one of his great features, such as "I've Got To Sing A Torch Song". A nice paperback edition of a great band.

RICHARD COOK

**WERNER LÜDI/BURHAN ÖÇAL: GRAND BAZAR** (Creative Works Records CW1012). Seven improvised pieces from German altoist Lüdi and Turkish percussionist Öçal, who switches to the tanbur lute for one track. The darbuka drums which dominate Öçal's array of percussion have a centuries-old tradition of design and performance behind them. The saxophone, on the other hand, is an extravagant piece of European plumbing which first turned up in 1842.



The performers are cheerfully unperturbed by these discrepancies of time, culture and context and set about exploring the ways in which the two can meet. Assertiveness and restraint come and go quite naturally; rhythms emerge and dissipate with apparent ease; unhurried conversations develop in which more is implied than stated and which are then abandoned without regret. Even when the pace gets more frenetic, there is no undignified scrambling to fill the available space. Fine music, impeccably recorded.

ROGER THOMAS

**SPIRIT LEVEL: THE SWISS RADIO TAPES** (cassette only from Tim Richards, 37 Dundalk Road, London SE4 2JJ). Both sides of this Radio Suisse Romande recording from 14-15

November 1988 contain extracts from suites, pianist Tim Richards', commissioned by South West Arts, and tenor player Paul Dunmall's. Both are exhilarating springboards for improvised explorations of deceptively simple riff-based tunes, with their respective composers in fierce form as soloists — Dunmall his usual big-toned ebullient self, Richards sparkling, funky and delicate by turns. Tony Marsh was drummer on the tour and provides an interesting contrast with Tony Orrell, all ticking cymbals and subtle rolls, decorative where Orrell would have been propulsive. Bassist Paul Anstey is sinuously melodic throughout and the whole is unreservedly recommended: bright, intelligent and muscular.

CHRIS PARKER

**HORACE SILVER: THE BEST OF THE BLUE NOTE YEARS** (Blue Note B1-91143). **HERBIE HANCOCK: THE BEST OF THE BLUE NOTE YEARS** (Blue Note B1-91142). The latest in Blue Note's hard-nosed marketing strategy for keeping the music of the 50s and 60s moving well into the 90s. If you've only heard of Silver on dancefloors or in magazines this is an ideal way of getting to know him a little better. And because of the judicious choice of tracks you'll be getting an intro to the unhurried elegance of Hank Mobley's tenor as well as four of the best trumpeters to labour in the shade of Miles and Brownie.

Same excellent packaging for Herbie Hancock, same recommendations. A choice selection with a couple of groove tunes ("Watermelon", "Canteloupe"), a couple of impressionistics (out of *Maiden Voyage*), lots of Carter and Williams (together with Hancock, one of the most renowned rhythm sections in jazz) and even more of Freddie Hubbard (sideman on so many historic recordings of 60s jazz).

STEVE LEWIS

**STANLEY JORDAN: FLYING HOME** (EMI-Manhattan MTL 1034). Mr Jordan doing what he doesn't do best. Anything in the way of so-called "innovation" that his technique might have brought to the music is totally submerged in the slick drum machines and synthesisers of producer Preston Glass. The guitar sounds like a pale imitation of George Benson. Good to do the ironing to.

ROLAND RAMANAN

## OUTLINES

Click those castanets to the hot, saucy sounds of TONY HERRINGTON's Latin round-up.

THE BIG news of last summer for UK Latin fans was Charly Records' licensing of Jerry Masucci's Fania label complete with its Allegre, Tico, Cotique and Vaya subsidiaries. In recent years Fania's position as the outlet for NY Latin music has been tarnished by interne-cine battles, the loss of several key signings, increasingly conservative release schedules and the emergence of a host of more dynamic rival companies. Sensibly (and typically) Charly's initial projected release of some 64 LPs concentrates on Fania's golden years from the tail-end of the 50s mambo era and the *charangapachanga* boom of the early 60s through bugaloo/Latin soul, Latin jazz, the *tipico* revival and the eventual move towards a tougher, less dogmatic *conjunto* style that mixed in some jazz, 60s soul, mainstream pop and various non-Cuban Caribbean elements to emerge in the early 70s as salsa.

Not surprisingly, the budget-priced sampler *This Is Latin Music* (Shot 1) and volume two of Dave Hucker's *We Got Latin Soul* (Hot 111) series are already proving to be the major sellers in the first batch of 11 releases. Aside from the distinctly marginal pleasures of BOBBY VALENTINE's "Bad Breath" and WILLIE COLON's "Willie Whopper", the latter includes Filipino bandleader JOE BATAAN's genre-breaking Latin/doowop anthem "Subway Joe". The title holds a certain irony in light of Joe's post-bugaloo career which has remained resolutely underground despite the fact that his now largely forgotten 70s recordings for Salsoul and MCA helped pave the way for the NY Latin/disco movement of the mid-70s and, consequently, the NY-Miami Latin/hip-hop movement of the late 80s.

The story of Joe's roller-coaster progression from success to obscurity to success and back again remains an object lesson for anyone trying to break the ephemeral nature of the US crossover market. The career of TITO PUENTE, for instance, has intersected with the mainstream on and off for over 40 years now but the Cuban *timbalero* has never been able fully to relinquish his marginal status. *The Best Of The Sixties* (Hot 105) captures him and his Orchestra in transition between the mambo-fixated

50s and the coming hybridisation and fragmentation of the music in the 70s. Compare it to the approximately contemporaneous tracks on **MACHITO AND HIS AFRO-CUBANS' Greatest Hits** (Hot 106) and you can hear how the latter's sophisticated wash of mambos, rumbas, boleros and guarachas was subjected to a hardening of attitudes, characterised by faster tempos, more complex arrangements and the inclusion of a track like "Fancy Feet", which transposes Perez Prado's 50s mambo "Patricia" into a stunningly kitsch attempt at a 60s pop instrumental.

Aside from CELIA CRUZ and WILLIE COLON's 1987 reunion LP *The Winners* (Hot 113) the remaining Caliente releases all concentrate on Fania's massive catalogue of classic 70s salsa. REUBEN BLADES' 1977 "Salsa Renaissance" LP *Metiendo Mano* (Hot 103) and LARRY

ing *Celia Cruz* of the salsa/samba fusion "Bebimbau" underlines the extent to which Brazilian music infiltrated the senses of *NuYorican* musicians during the 70s and early 80s. Expect a similar process to occur over the next few months on the fringes of Western pop. The signs were already posted last summer when *Billboard* magazine devoted 28 pages to Brazilian music and now we have Arto Lindsay's *Greed*, with its sexy baiaos and sambas, David Byrne's imminent Bahian project on EMI and plans by Rio Records to bring Brazilian hip-hop musicians to record in London as confirmations of the trend.

Rio's large-scale licensing of the Som Da Gente label's jazz releases hint at this direction without really being a part of it. HERALDO DO MONTE's *Cordas Vivas* (RRPL 006) and *Comboio* (RRPL 005) by NATAN MARQUES and RICARDO LEAO, for instance, are torpid excursions into the grey area separating New Age from New Jazz, remarkable only for their total exclusion of any recognisably Brazilian elements. Guitarist ALMIR SATE's *Instrumental* (RRPL 004) makes some similar elisions, sounding like a hi-tech cross between Jorge Ben's "Taj Mahal" and, I kid you not, John Fahey's *I Remember Blind Joe Death*. More conventional as far as records of Brazilian guitar music go is *Alma Brasiliera* (Nonesuch 979179 1) by SERGIO and ODAIR ASSAD, a series of short duets that charts a course through the history of 20th-century Brazilian composition, from the early "Nationalist" pieces of Hector Villa-Lobos and Rudames Gnattali to the contemporary avant-garde works of Hermeto Pascoal and Egberto Gismondi. A pleasant record.

As far as contemporary Brazilian pop goes I prefer to listen to the New Wave of Tropicalista groups like Banda Reflexus and Obina Shock, or, alternatively, two releases from the AIRTO MOREIRA/FLORA PURIM axis. *Milestone Memories* (BGP 1008) is a very engaging collection of tracks from Purim's Fantasy LPs with George Duke, Alphonso Johnson and Ndugu, while *The Colors Of Life* (In + Out 001) includes a version of Azymuth's jazz/funk classic "Partido Alto", the beguiling 1980 samba "Anatelia" and another of Airto's multi-tracked set pieces for voice and percussion. It's good enough a record to tide me over until someone gets round to re-releasing his Afro-Brazilian Latin/jazz LPs from the 70s, *Seeds On The Ground* and *Identity*.



HARLOW's *Salsa!* (Hot 104) are both straight reissues while volume one of *Salsa Greats* (Hot 102) steals my vote for compilation of the year by including EDDIE PALMIERI's epic *montuno* "Azucar" and COLON's 1972 smash "Che Che Cole", his first major post-bugaloo success and one which predated the radical pan-Latin fusions of *Lo Mato* and *The Good, The Bad, The Ugly*. Equally compelling are *Hard Hands*, a compilation of RAY BARRETTO material that includes his phenomenal 1967 R&B/jazz-influenced *conjunto* instrumental "Acid", and *Introducing Celia Cruz*, a useful collection of the Cuban diva's landmark recordings with Dominican flautist JOHNNY PACHECO, THE FANIA ALL STARS and Cuban supergroup LA SONORA PONCENA, massive last summer with their Inca LP *On The Right Track*.

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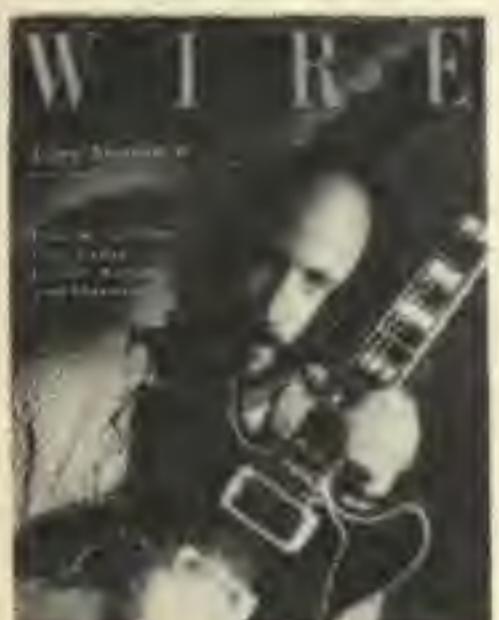
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## WITHERED JAZZ!

PERIODICALLY jazz becomes modish: currently it even lends its name to a perfume and is supposedly more accessible (smells better?). Fashionable titillation has accompanied jazz from the brothels of Storyville to the "whites only" voyeurism of the Cotton Club. And, especially through the 1920s and 30s, jazz has also embraced the trivial, banal and the ridiculous – mostly through its ties with vaudeville. Yet despite these unpromising conditions sometimes great music was made. No one is sure what the term "jazz" originally meant but its meaning today is derived from its diverse and continuing history. A significant and growing part of that history is a people taking their music seriously – despite the hoops through which many of its performers were asked to jump. For many black people in the USA the move towards greater freedom was accompanied by the development and the maturity of an art which served their alienated existence in American social life. As they desired more dignity so they invested more dignity into their jazz.

There are some who bemoan this "serious as your life" approach. And anyone who takes jazz seriously apparently risks George Melly's threat to "shit on them from a great height" ("Courtney Pine", *Omnibus*, BBC 1, 24.11.88). One might feel like retaliating save that George's stage clothes give the impression that something similar has already occurred. So why, if Melly is a jazz musician, should we not take him seriously? After all he writes seriously enough on art and the cinema. What is this alter-ego stuff when he comes to sing?

George doesn't want anyone to spoil his fun. I recall his nostalgic recollections about the lively (for him) post-war years, when he as a young man knowingly indulged in the pretence of the "black jazz life". Now he gets protective of the life-style he has nurtured when someone suggests that jazz is more important or different from what he wants (or needs) it to be. Perhaps George's dilemma lies in his own confused persona. For I am not alone in thinking that if he parodies any musician it must be Bessie Smith – the black vaudeville and blues songstress. Even for a well-to-do ageing white Englishman this is some fantasy.

So what if you find jazz music is something more than a flirtation with exotica? What if you see a rich cultural phenomenon forever being devalued? What if you feel that the prancing parodying of other men, living in other times and in other places is as edifying and as artificial as a modern "pop" pantomime?

The real continuities of jazz speak of a

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uniquely mobile aesthetic practice – improvisation – that has noticeably and beautifully changed to meet the needs and aspirations of its own time and place. And there are reasons why jazz is made this way. Just as the field-hollers of plantation times warned, in code, other field workers that the overseer was on his rounds, so the inflection of each blues performance and the kaleidoscopic changes in each bebop solo speak, as a cypher, as much of the constant threat to black integrity in subsequent phases of North American life. Such mobility in artistic content mirrors the jazz artist's escape route from cultural oppression – even though white art music (through, for example, Milhaud and Stravinsky) and Tin Pan Alley have so often looted this loaded mine of creativity.

Even now the greatest jazz artists still have to endure what Kofsky poignantly labelled the "cockroach capitalism" of the sleazy jazz club environment – that Melly romanticises so much. Of course jazz was fun, is fun – but it was always much more than dressing up and wearing red noses and funny hats. But at times it has been no picnic – as the broken lives of so many of its great artists attest.

We should take George Melly seriously – clearly TV producers do when they invite him to sound off. What we see, though, is an ageing white affluent middle-class Englishman camping up a mostly black music. Not a pretty sight; but he cannot afford for others to take jazz seriously, because they'll see right through the whole bandwagon of pseudo-traditionalism that masquerades as jazz music, and diminishes one of the most important cultural movements of this century.

EDDIE PRÉVOST, Matching Tye

## NO NOTES

MAY I endorse Mike Zwerin's comments on the supposed "threat" to the music business of home taping and expand on one point he touched on – that of liner notes?

For too long, cassette-buyers (still the biggest market) have been asked to pay the same high prices for cassettes as for records, but are discriminated against in the matter of documentation. This has long been a bone of contention in the classical-music field, especially with vocal works where no texts are supplied. Although some companies have found it possible to give complete texts in three or more languages, even on their mid-price labels, others, EMI for example, give none even on full-price products.

Now the same problem is spreading among jazz labels; in some cases not even recording dates and personnel are supplied, let alone contextual notes which I for one, as a newcomer to jazz, find usually helpful. Ironically, one of the worst offenders is – you've guessed! – Blue Note, whose recent tapes include no documentation at all – merely a potted history of the "Blue Note legend" – *the same liner in every cassette!*

If companies are indeed losing money, they have only their own cavalier attitude towards the public to blame.

DAVID ROSE, Ashford

## DANCE

AS A recent convert to jazz music and a keen dancer, I wonder if anyone can help me? I am searching Yorkshire for a group of people who specialise in dancing to jazz. I have not been very successful as yet, but I am still trying. I don't care where they are as long as they are teaching beginners. My ultimate ambition is to have a company of jazz dancers working from Yorkshire.

DAVE SARKAR, 33 Harold Street, Leeds  
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## BROADCAST NOOSE

IT IS common for people to bemoan the neglect of jazz on the airwaves in this country, and for good reason. But as a journalist with much experience of working on both *Radio Times* and *TV Times* I wonder why no magazines go out of their way to highlight the little that is on offer.

Between them the national television and radio networks and local radio do regularly put out programmes and features of note. Who knows, the satellite stations may add more. Yet the listings publications are not good at giving them the space and critical assessment they warrant. Why doesn't *Wire* cast a discerning eye (and ear) over what's coming and let its readers in on it?

ROBIN JAROSSI, London N1

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